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FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS, THE LESBIAN AND GAY WEEKLY

## U.S. unveils 'insulting' visa policy

*Although those attending government approved conferences may now apply for a 'no questions asked' temporary visa, immigration restrictions that discriminate against people with HIV remain in effect*

By Jennie McKnight

WASHINGTON — In response to increasing criticism of U.S. immigration restrictions for people with HIV, the Bush administration issued April 13 a new visa policy that would make it easier for people who do not wish to disclose their HIV antibody status to enter the U.S. in order to attend conferences. Opponents of the regulations dismissed the new policy as inadequate and predicted it would have no effect on the threatened boycotts of two upcoming conferences.

Under the new policy, special 10-day visas could be issued to people "scheduled to attend professional, scientific or academic conferences in the U.S. which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines to be in the public interest," according to an administration press release. Not surprisingly, the administration also announced that Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan has already certified that the two conferences being boycotted — the Sixth International Conference on AIDS to be held in June in San Francisco and the 19th International Congress of the World Federation of Hemophilia to be held in Washington in August — qualify for the new visa procedure.

The 10-day visas would be issued to conference-goers on a "no questions asked" basis, according to Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) spokesperson Richard Kenney. Those who do not qualify or who choose not to apply for the special short-term visas will remain subject to the existing 30-day waiver policy, which requires travelers who are infected with HIV to declare their HIV status and apply for the waiver. This waiver policy applies to those seeking to enter the country "for medical conferences, to receive medical treatment, to visit close family members or to conduct temporary business activities."

### 'Insulting'

The announcement "demonstrates that the heat is on," said Jorge Cortinas of the Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Services in California, one of the nearly 100 domestic and international groups calling for the boycott of the San Francisco Conference. But he called the administration's action "completely cosmetic" and "insulting."

"It's insulting that [the administration] would think the new visa would change the minds of the groups boycotting," said Cortinas, because the reason the boycott was called is to protest the idea that HIV status should be a basis for denying someone entry or residence in the U.S.

"It's also insulting that the Bush administration thinks it can pit one group of opponents of the policy against another,"

he added, referring to the fact that the new policy only addresses people visiting the U.S. to attend conferences, disregarding Asian, Latino and other residents who already live in this country but who can be denied permanent residence based on their HIV status.

Many critics of the U.S. policy described the administration's action as a weak attempt to address a problem that has caused increasing international and domestic condemnation and embarrassment. That problem can only be solved, they argue, if HIV is removed from the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) list of "dangerous and contagious diseases" that allow INS officials to deny entry or residence to people with HIV. The administration — from the Justice Department (which runs INS) to the State Department to the White House — has continued to argue that it is powerless to remove HIV from the CDC list because it was added by an act of Congress.

But in its announcement of the new 10-day visas, the administration failed to declare its support of legislation that would effectively end the discriminatory policy. Rep. J. Roy Rowland (D-Ga.), a physician and member of the Presidential AIDS Commission, introduced a bill earlier this month that would give the Department of Health and Human Services the sole authority to maintain the CDC list.

If the administration were serious about ending discrimination against people with HIV and AIDS — as President Bush claimed two weeks ago in his first major speech on the topic since taking office — it would throw its weight behind the Rowland legislation, according to activists and observers. Larry Kessler, executive director of Boston's AIDS Action Committee and another member of Bush's AIDS Commission, called the administration's position "politics over public health."

Opponents of the immigration restrictions say they hope Congress will pass the Rowland legislation soon, but there is little optimism about the chances of it passing in time to affect the June conference in San Francisco. Dana Van Gorder, spokesperson for the Sixth International AIDS Conference, told GCN "I know of no organizations that have shifted their position" on the boycott as a result of the 10-day visa announcement.

Activists expect participation in the boycott to continue to grow as the June conference date approaches. A protest of the discriminatory policies, which will begin at the conference site and end at the INS regional offices in San Francisco, is being organized by ACT UP/San Francisco and other groups.

□ filed from Boston



## APRIL BOOK REVIEW

### Is saliva a murder weapon?

*Despite ample evidence indicating that HIV is not spread through saliva, several people with HIV have been convicted of attempted murder for spitting and biting*

By Jennie McKnight

CAMDEN, N.J. — Public health officials, medical researchers and AIDS educators agree that saliva is not a mode of transmission for HIV, the virus thought by many to be a cause of AIDS. But a number of recent legal cases indicate that many police officers, prison guards, lawyers, judges and juries are ignorant about saliva's role in HIV transmission. People with HIV and AIDS who bite or spit at others are increasingly being charged, convicted, and sentenced for attempted murder as well as other serious crimes. Many of those convicted are already prisoners, who, in addition to the discrimination they face as people with HIV infection inside prison, lack the resources and public support to fight the charges.

Take the case of Gregory Smith, a Black gay PWA who was convicted of attempted murder earlier this month based on a prison guard's claim that Smith bit him. Smith was diagnosed with AIDS four years ago, when his doctor told him he could expect to live two years at most. He was taking AZT, an anti-HIV drug, at the time he entered the Camden County Jail in April of 1989. But the jail denied him the drug, and basically ignored his health, according to Smith. By June his weight had dropped to 110 pounds (Smith, who went back on AZT when he was transferred to a state prison in Trenton after the incident, currently weighs 176 pounds).

On the night of June 10, Smith told GCN, he blacked out in his cell and injured his back when he hit the toilet while falling. When he was discovered there, paramedics were called to take him to a nearby medical center for treatment. He was escorted by two guards, who handcuffed and shackled him and stayed with him while he was ex-

amined at the medical center.

When the doctor who examined him said he did not need to have an X-ray taken of his back, Smith said he refused to leave the hospital until he got an X-ray. At that point one of the guards threw him to the floor, cuffed his hands behind his back and took him to a nearby trauma room, according to Smith, where the guard proceeded to hold Smith down in a kneeling position while beating him on the back and telling him "how much he hated niggers." Smith said that it was during this beating, while the guard was holding Smith down by the cuffs behind him, that the guard received a cut between his knuckles which he later claimed was a bite wound inflicted by Smith.

Smith said that despite conflicting testimony at his trial about what happened that night, including inconsistencies in the accounts of various guards and other witnesses, the jury believed he bit the guard. Because Smith is a PWA, they also believed he tried to kill the guard.

"Unfortunately, prisoners who are beaten up by guards who lose control are often charged with assault," said Judy Greenspan of the National Prison Project of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), referring to the fact that stories like Smith's are not uncommon. This injustice, however, can be compounded if the prisoner is infected with HIV. "An assault charge for somebody who is HIV-positive translates into an attempted murder charge," said Greenspan. Prisoners in this situation have a tremendous burden, she said, "because not only do they have to find a lawyer for their criminal case, but they have to come up with a defense against having AIDS." This situation is exacerbated by

Continued on page 6



### Salk vaccine tested amidst media uproar

LA JOLLA, Calif. — Amidst much media attention, new clinical trials are beginning for Dr. Jonas Salk's HIV vaccine. The trials attracted mainstream media interest when the Roman Catholic archbishop of Los Angeles urged priests and nuns over 65 years of age to volunteer for the upcoming tests of the vaccine's safety. Salk is credited with developing the first commercial vaccine against polio.

According to the *New York Times*, the vaccine consists of the killed HIV virus. Trials began two years ago at UCLA, where over 100 HIV positive people have received the vaccine in hopes of strengthening their immune system's response to the virus.

On March 12, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced approval of expanding the trials outside of California. Under a 1987 law, clinical trials for AIDS-related treatments can be performed in California without FDA approval. The expanded trials would involve over 100 people at 36 sites throughout the U.S.

Salk also applied to California health officials to begin another set of trials, in which HIV-negative individuals would be injected with the killed HIV virus. When contacted by *GCN*, state health officials declined to comment on whether the trials had been approved, saying that the information was a trade secret.

The trials were widely publicized when Los Angeles Archbishop Roger Mahoney wrote a letter to the 3,500 priests and nuns in the archdiocese seeking volunteers for the trials. According to Gay and Lesbian Atheists of San Francisco, Salk's program had no shortage of volunteers for the test. A spokesperson for the atheist group called the move by the archbishop "another cynical attempt by the church to improve its tarnished image," according to the groups' newsletter, the *Realist*.

Several steps would be involved in the experiment. The first will be to learn whether HIV-negative volunteers to develop antibodies to the virus. If they do, their antibodies would be injected into PWAs in an attempt to strengthen their immune response to the virus.

The process, known as passive immunization, has been used successfully against hepatitis and rabies.

Salk's vaccine is one of seven currently being tested in several countries.

□ Laura Briggs

### New reports on KS

BOSTON — New information about the causes and treatment of Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) has emerged recently. The January 20, 1990, issue of the British medical journal *The Lancet* includes findings from two studies that examined the epidemiology of KS and its relationship or non-relationship to HIV, the virus thought by many to be a cause of AIDS. (According to *AIDS Treatment News*, KS is often described as a cancer in news reports, but, in fact, the cells in KS lesions do not behave like cancer cells. Because KS is probably caused by one or more growth factors, according to the newsletter, it could be easier to treat than cancer.)

One study, authored by V. Beral and others, suggests that KS may be an infectious disease spread primarily through sexual contact. Evidence for this theory is based on the widely varying incidence of KS among different groups of people with AIDS. People who are thought to have been infected with HIV through sexual contact are much more likely to have KS than those who were infected through other means (such as sharing IV needles or blood transfusion).

Another study published in *The Lancet* reports on cases of KS in people who are not infected with HIV. This study relies on data gathered by a New York researcher Alvin Friedman-Kien. After testing hundreds of blood samples taken from patients with KS, a small number (fewer than ten) of samples were found to be HIV-negative. These data lend support to the theory that KS is a separate epidemic from AIDS, despite the fact that most cases of KS occur in people with AIDS. KS "...was probably introduced simultaneously into the gay community with AIDS," Friedman-Kien told the *New York Times*.

An important consequence of Friedman-Kien's study is that it calls into question the role of KS in the diagnosis of AIDS. Since

KS is part of the Centers for Disease Control's official definition of AIDS, it is possible that some people have been diagnosed with AIDS based only on their having KS. Some may never have been tested for HIV antibodies, for example.

Separate from the recent research on the possible cause of KS, Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) told an academic audience February 22 that a good potential treatment for KS exists in Japan, according to *AIDS Treatment News*. Gallo said the compounds "wipe out [KS] in a way I have never seen before," but did not mention them by name. Inquiries to the NCI about the treatments have been met with the vague response that the compounds "are under preclinical development," and that Gallo's lab will pursue collaboration with the Japanese company to further investigate them.

□ Jennie McKnight

### New drug fights perinatal HIV infection

NEW YORK — Researchers reported April 12 that an experimental drug may prevent the transmission of HIV from pregnant women who are HIV positive to their newborn babies. According to the *Boston Globe*, monkeys who were injected with the drug had babies who carried the drug in their bloodstream, thus building up resistance to HIV within the newborns.

The authors of the report said that the drug, which is a CD4 immunoadhesin, seemed to reach the monkeys' fetuses as easily as natural proteins that build up resistance in humans reach human fetuses.

The new study, which was reported in the latest issue of the British journal, *Nature*, was authored by Daniel Capon and colleagues of Genetech, Inc., in San Francisco and Jerome Groopman and colleagues at Harvard Medical School and New England Deaconess Hospital in Boston.

"Our hope is that this special property of the molecule will make it particularly useful" in preventing perinatal HIV infection, said Capon.

The drug has been effective in test tube experiments, but has not been tested in humans. The immunoadhesin is an artificial mix of two natural proteins: CD4, which can be found on the surface of some cells, and an immunoglobulin that is central to the functioning of the human body's immune system.

The study builds on previous research which has shown that immunoadhesins can prevent HIV from spreading to new cells and can also kill infected cells while leaving healthy cells alone. Since natural immunoglobulins build up over time within fetuses, a similar result could be found with the new drug, if it is given early enough in pregnancy, said Capon.

□ Kelly Gaines

### Men of color sought

BOSTON — During the month of April the Multicultural AIDS Coalition and the Latino Health Network are conducting a voluntary AIDS Research Survey of gay and bisexual men of color in the Boston area. The data gathered in the survey will be used to identify the need for additional resources for local gay and bisexual men of color.

Participation in the anonymous survey involves answering a brief questionnaire, which takes about 15 minutes. There are no medical tests or physical exams involved in the survey, and volunteers do not need to have been tested for HIV antibodies. To participate, contact the Multicultural AIDS Coalition at 536-0390 or Francisco of the Latino Health Network at 262-7248 before April 27.

□ Jennie McKnight

### New DDI group to meet in Boston

BOSTON — A DDI users' group is now forming for support and sharing of information. DDI is an experimental antiviral drug now being tested in clinical trials here. The group meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m. at the AIDS Action Committee offices, 131 Clarendon St. For more information, contact Charlie Hannagan at 267-3578.

□ Kelly Gaines

## Gay Men and AIDS: A Look into the 90s

Thursday, May 3 • 7 p.m. • Faneuil Hall

Join the AIDS Action Committee for an evening forum devoted to a look into the next decade and the opportunities and challenges it will bring for gay men.

Moderated by AAC Executive Director Larry Kessler, the forum brings together a range of experts, activists, and politicians.

A question and answer session will follow the forum. The speakers and their topics will include:

### Rep. Barney Frank

(D-MA): AIDS, Politics, and Government Funding

### Craig Harris

Coordinator of AIDS Prevention Programs for People of Color at the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York  
Challenges facing Black Gay Men

### Ted Karavidas

The Boston PWA Coalition and Executive Director of Northern Lights Alternatives/New England:  
PWA Self-Empowerment, Testing, and Early Intervention

### Chris LaCharite

Cinical Partners: Gay Sexual Issues, Dating, and Intimacy

### Orlando del Valle

Executive Director of the Latino Health Network: Issues Facing the Latino Gay Man

### Dr. Scott Harris

The Fenway Community Health Center: A Look into the Medical Crystal Ball

Everyone invited. Free Admission.

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# Gay teacher fired in P'town

*After being told that his contract would not be renewed, a gay high school teacher files a complaint under the gay rights law*

By Laura Briggs

PROVINCETOWN, Mass. — Charging that his teaching contract was not renewed because he is gay and because the school administration believes he has AIDS, a social studies teacher here filed a complaint April 11 with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) under the state's new lesbian and gay rights law.

In his complaint, Philip Buckley said that although he never told anyone in the school system he is gay, he has been routinely subjected to anti-gay taunts from students. According to Buckley, who has taught at Provincetown High School for two years, his attempts to discipline students who were harassing him were never supported by the school principal, Paul Grueter. Buckley also said that Grueter questioned the validity of Buckley's complaints while readily accepting the students' accounts as truth.

"My sexual orientation is a private matter, but the students figured it out because I refused to answer their questions about my private life," said Buckley in a statement released by Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD), which filed the complaint on his behalf. "Since then, I have been called every name in the book. Although I discipline the students for this behavior, the administration has not backed me up. The students got the message that they could taunt me with impunity. Now, the administration perceives me as the problem, rather than the students' misbehavior and the administration's acquiescence to that behavior," he said.

GLAD's Mary Bonauto, who is representing Buckley, said that her client was unavailable for comment.

In the complaint, Buckley said that he had tried to go through proper channels following several instances of anti-gay harassment between November 1989 and January 1990, but that Grueter refused to take his complaints seriously. Following a lengthy meeting with Grueter in early January, Buckley received a memo from Grueter who said that he had to "start writing this up" because he was concerned about complaints

from students.

The memo detailed several of the incidents from the point of view of the students. One female student alleged that Buckley asked someone to hold his penis for him while he went to the bathroom. Another female student said that Buckley had called her mother a "whore." According to Buckley, both students eventually recanted their statements and the teacher said he believed the matters had been resolved.

In early March, Buckley received a poor evaluation from Grueter that recommended that the teacher's contract not be renewed. Buckley called the evaluation "abysmal" in comparison to last year's review.

In addition to the Provincetown School Committee and Grueter, Buckley also charged Superintendent Robert Barbarisi with discrimination. Buckley said after he received Grueter's memo in January, he took time off because of distress. During that time, Buckley said that Barbarisi called Buckley's physician to confirm a widely accepted rumor among students and teachers that Buckley had AIDS. Barbarisi was told that this was untrue.

Neither Barbarisi nor Grueter could be reached for comment during school vacation week.

GLAD's Bonauto said that the civil rights case will be important because "all these suits under the new law will be precedent-setting." Both Bonauto and Judy Wright of MCAD, the state agency which investigates charges of discrimination, said they believe that even if the gay rights law were to be overturned by a referendum in November, Buckley's complaint would be pursued because the referendum language would not invalidate the law retroactively.

Since the gay rights law went into effect in February, Wright estimates that MCAD has received fewer than ten complaints. (In contrast, last year in Boston, where a city human rights ordinance has protected lesbian and gay civil rights since 1984, about

Continued on page 6

# Peptide T trial to continue in Boston

*AIDS activists and trial participants hail the drug's efficacy — so far*

By Joe Cice

BOSTON — Pressure from AIDS activists has led to the continuation of a Peptide T trial, previously scheduled to end April 30 at a local health center.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has made a financial commitment to the Fenway Community Health Center which will enable Fenway to continue providing Peptide T free of charge to at least 17 participants in the Phase-one toxicity trial which began last summer. Trial participants and activists had feared that Fenway would be unable to continue providing the drug as promised because Bristol-Myers, the drug's co-sponsor, dropped its support for Peptide T.

Dale Orlando, Fenway's executive director, told GCN she is frustrated by the lack of financial support for Peptide T. "Initially we were told that the drug would be available on a humanitarian basis." In October, however, Bristol-Myers officially severed all ties to the license of Peptide T, apparently choosing to focus on the drug DDI instead. "Without a drug manufacturer pushing to bring Peptide T to the market," said Orlando, "there is no leverage to move the drug into a Phase-two efficacy trial."

Some Peptide T trial participants and representatives from NIMH and Fenway met April 17 to discuss the conditions under which participants will continue to receive the drug. Representatives from the Food and Drug Administration also participated through a telephone hook-up. According to John Perry Ryan, a member of the Provincetown Positive/PWA Coalition's Board of Directors, the unresolved issues include

whether participants will be allowed to take other medications and engage in complementary therapies, and whether participants will now know the amounts of their doses. Ryan said he wanted to be certain that participants who left or were dropped from the study will still be able to receive Peptide T.

Ryan expressed satisfaction that the drug will be provided without interruption, and with "minimal monitoring." The participants, having each spent six months in the trial, are understandably tired of the monitoring, he said. "The most eloquent statement about whether Peptide T is useful in fighting HIV comes from people on the drug," Ryan told GCN. One trial participant, he said, told the officials at the April 17 meeting that "I'll eat dog shit to go back on Peptide T."

Researchers have not yet discovered any toxicity in Peptide T, and there have been accounts of improvement in some participants' sleep, memory function, energy levels, weight gain, alertness, motor reflexes, mood, and dreaming. Some people using Peptide T have also reported alleviation of skin problems, diarrhea, night sweats, and headaches.

Since Peptide T has not received FDA approval, it is difficult to obtain, although some organizations have gained access to the drug. "I don't know why people would be getting down on Peptide T," said Ron Woodruff, director of the Dallas Buyers' Club. "I'm a believer in it personally. I use it myself." Woodruff said that he has "had 30

Continued on page 6



# Bringing the 'abortion pill' to the U.S.

*Although many pro-choice and women's health advocates see RU-486 as being extremely promising, pressure from anti-abortionists has prevented the French drug from being marketed in other countries*

By Laura Briggs

BOSTON — RU-486, the "abortion pill" developed in France, has been a significant battleground for reproductive rights advocates and abortion foes in the past two years. Anti-abortion opposition has thus far discouraged the pharmaceutical company that holds the patent on the drug from marketing it outside of France. Feminists from many countries have tried to make the drug available more widely, even considering importing it illegally, saying they believe that the drug could place more control over abortion during very early stages of pregnancy in the hands of women.

Although current reports indicate that Roussel-Uclaf, the company that holds RU-486's patent, is considering making the drug available to companies in Britain, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands, it is unclear whether the drug will be legally available outside of France in the near future. Roussel-Uclaf has been hesitant to allow the marketing of the drug in other countries, and even attempted to pull it off the French market because of anti-abortionist pressure.

In November 1989, RU-486's inventor, Etienne Baulieu, created a stir in the U.S. when he told a Boston audience that he was interested in marketing it in this country. The company promptly responded that Baulieu was speaking for himself, and that Roussel-Uclaf had no immediate plans to market it in the U.S.

"RU-486 is going to come into this country. The question is whether it will come in legally or on the black market," said Patricia Ireland of the National Organization for Women (NOW). "Anyone who believes that the U.S. government can prevent illegal drugs from entering the country is living in another century," she told GCN, adding, "It is my opinion that it would be much better if it came in legally."

The only trials of RU-486 in the U.S. were conducted between 1983-89 by the Population Council in California, and there may be an independent initiative in that state to make the drug available. A 1987 law written for AIDS drugs makes it possible for drug trials to be conducted prior to approval by the Food and Drug Administration, and a candidate for governor has promised to try to bring RU-486 into that state.

In an ironic twist, Attorney General John Van de Kamp, known as an abortion foe before his gubernatorial candidacy, has promised to attempt to begin RU-486 trials under the supervision of the World Health Organization. Whether Roussel-Uclaf will permit this use of the drug is unknown.

## Safety of RU-486

Reproductive rights activists have traditionally been leery of new contraceptive and abortifacient drugs because of women's experience with DES, the IUD, the early high-dosage contraceptive pill, and other

reproductive technologies that have had devastating negative health consequences. An increasing number of activists in the women's health movement, however, say they see RU-486 in a positive light.

Judy Norsigian of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective told GCN that she believes the drug is safer than existing reproductive health technologies. "You don't want to use RU-486 without medical back-up. But even if it is given out like aspirin, RU-486 is safer than the IUD and the pill," she said.

"I was really hesitant at first to jump on the bandwagon about a new pharmaceutical," said Charlotte Taft of the Routh Street Women's Clinic in Dallas, "but if I had it tomorrow in my clinic, I'd use it in about one minute."

Taft travelled to France and interviewed patients, doctors, and nurses at one hospital about their experiences with the drug. Compared with surgical abortion, which she said many women felt was "invasive," Taft said that in using RU-486, "women are much more active in the process. It is really like having an early miscarriage."

Although Taft recognized that for women who are ambivalent about having an abortion, seeing the expelled tissue and being more involved in the procedure may not be necessarily desirable, she asked whether those women should be undergoing the procedure at that time anyway. "Sometimes you have to wait until the emotional, psychological, and spiritual issues are clear," she said.

Taft said that very few women were excluded by the hospital for physical reasons, and very few experienced serious complications from the drug. In Paris, she said that only about one in a thousand women using the drug experienced severe bleeding requiring transfusion.

She said that only a small number of women there could not take the drug because they were severely anemic, or had serious health problems. These women would not be eligible for surgical abortion, either, and could experience severe problems if the pregnancy continued.

Taft said she believes that used legally, RU-486 is probably safe and does not carry the risk of infection or accidental perforation involved in surgical abortion. Based on surveys she has done at her clinic, she believes that RU-486 could be used as an alternative to the surgical procedure about 30 percent of the time.

Last summer, when many believed that the Supreme Court might make abortion illegal throughout the U.S., reproductive rights activists began discussing obtaining and administering RU-486 illegally. In Boston alone, at least two groups were formed for this purpose.

NOW's Ireland said that she does not believe the drug could be illegally imported

Continued on page 6



## GCN Job Opening: Coordinating Editor

Available late June/early July. Provide overall coordination and administration of the financial, administrative, and public relations aspects of GCN. Develop annual budgets, financial strategies, and fundraising projects. Edit the "Community Voices" section of the newspaper. Assist coordination of Board and staff committees, as well as volunteers.

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## Holding bisexuals to a double standard

Dear GCN:

Lesbians and gay men are justifiably angry when ignorant heterosexuals claim that their sexual orientation is derived solely from what goes on in their pants or their bedrooms. It's therefore all the more disturbing to see lesbians Sarah Dreher and Lis Brook engaging in the same sort of stereotyping of bisexuals in the letters section of GCN (March 11-17, 1990).

I don't know the specific circumstances of the planning meetings for the Northampton, Mass. Pride March, so I won't address that issue. I do know the women's letter was loaded with prejudices and assumptions I'd hoped were disappearing. I'd like to dispel some of these myths for Ms. Brook and Ms. Dreher:

- You say your "lesbianism is a way of life, not just something we do in bed." This is as true for most bisexuals as it is for lesbians. Insinuating that bisexuals' sexual/emotional identity begins and ends at the bedroom door is doing the same thing to bisexuals that heterosexuals have done to lesbians and gay men. We bisexuals are not vaginas or clitorises or penises; we are whole human beings.

- Lesbian and gay issues are *not* identical to bisexual issues, but not because "bisexuals continue to enjoy heterosexual privilege." Some bisexuals with lovers of the opposite sex may enjoy heterosexual privilege in various ways, but as every closeted lesbian and gay man knows, passing as heterosexual is a double-edged sword.

And many bisexuals are in relationships with someone of the same sex. As a few bisexual activists have said during discussions on supporting anti-gay violence legislation, when gay bashers see you walking down the street with your same-sex part-

ners, they don't stop to ask you if you're bisexual and then beat up only half your body if you answer yes.

At times here in Rochester, N.Y., bisexuals were the only queers available to talk to the media about gay and lesbian events and issues and be on camera as out-of-the-closet spokespeople, without identifying ourselves as bisexuals. I don't call this "enjoying hetero privilege."

Bisexual women and men are creating our own community. But building a community takes time, and all communities borrow elements from those that have preceded them. The gay rights movement borrowed from the women's movement, which borrowed from the Black civil rights movement; and so the bisexual movement borrows from the gay and lesbian movement. I'm sad some lesbians and gay men feel threatened rather than flattered that bisexuals find their movement and culture admirable enough that we want to borrow elements from it.

Yes, some of us bisexual women "attach ourselves to the lesbian community." We are not leeches if we draw strength from a women-loving subculture that has created wonderful music, literature, visual art and politics in the midst of a larger culture that hates women. It doesn't mean we bisexuals aren't working to create our own community.

Some of us also were in same-sex relationships for years, helped build the lesbian and gay communities, have done enormous amounts of work, and are still part of that world.

It saddens and angers me that you believe the lesbian and gay agenda cannot include bisexual issues — because many of our issues are the same — and that you want bisexuals to march in "your" parade as supporters and not as an integral part of the event.

We had a wonderful Pride Parade here in Rochester. Bisexuals were involved in every step of the planning process and the event itself. This may be because the idea for the parade originated with our local ACT-UP chapter, which at the time had at least one bisexual member and which tried to be as inclusive as possible each time it planned an event.

In any case, the event (the official name was the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Pride Parade) was a success and the lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and heterosexuals who participated got along fine. Of course, we don't always cooperate so well, and I've heard more than my share of complaints that bisexuals are "taking up space that belongs to gays and lesbians" in the local queer newspaper that's desperate for columnists, and offhand biphobic remarks even from local out gay elected officials.

But for the most part, everyone seems to get along well with each other. Whether this is because the gay and lesbian community here has developed to the point where it doesn't feel threatened by bisexuals or because those who feel threatened don't have the courage to complain to our faces, I don't know. I'm just glad I'm here and not in Northampton.

Michele Moore  
Rochester, N.Y.

## Reducing men to "weenies"

Dear GCN:

I am writing to respond to a letter recently published in your paper, authored by "Revolting Lesbians" of San Francisco (GCN March 4-10, 1990). The principle of separatism, or principles, are legitimate and simple: we all have the right to designate space for ourselves, our friends, lovers, and so on. We have the right to exclude those who we deem to be representative of the forces or oppressions we seek to avoid. Whether or not Mr. Kevin (GCN Jan. 7-13, 1990) thinks it unfair to be excluded from wimmin-only space is irrelevant; the organizers and supporters of that space are entitled to it. To challenge their right to be left alone (and to privacy) is ridiculous, and a product of ignorance.

However, in reading the response from "Revolting Lesbians," a similar ignorance is revealed. I refer to the authors' use of "weenie" to represent the concepts of male sexuality and societal power. To reduce men to "adventurous weenies" is to echo the oppression of women in our heterosexist culture, legitimizing that oppression as a weapon. If the use of "weenies" is intended as a humor device, I suggest the authors think again. Even if the blender remark is suggested in humor (as I will presume here), it is not funny. It is violent, oppressive and

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Opinions reflected in "editorials" represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

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gay  
COMMUNITY  
NEWS



# Identifying as gay — there's the key

By Harry Hay

The deeply internalized white racism we Anglo-Saxon Americans by-and-large refuse to come to grips with is so clearly and frighteningly expressed in my Lesbian Sister Hudah Jadallah's Speaking Out piece in *GCN* Feb 11-17, 1990, that — at the expense of quite unfairly making her piece a scapegoat — I feel that we, as a Gay and Lesbian Family Community, must examine and discuss points raised in it.

To begin with, Sister Jadallah apologizes for being unable to bring her readers facts and figures on Palestinian Lesbianism (forgive my capital "L" in Lesbianism, but like my Black brothers I cannot bring myself to lower-casing our recently empowering acoutrements of our Gay identities) because, she says "but unfortunately, at this point due to homophobia, research on Palestinian (G)ays and (L)esbians is not available."

It is an oft-repeated truism that people who do not know their history are very often doomed to repeat its mistakes. The Palestinian Muslim Community cannot be held accountable for concepts which have not yet entered the consciousnesses of the newly-emerging social democracies of Eastern Europe or of the Soviet Union. And, indeed, if a national poll conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* in 1985 on the eve of the US Supreme Court's *Hardwick* decision (showing that 81% of the people of the United States still believe that homosexuality is wrong) is to be duly acknowledged, it would seem that such a concept has not as yet entered the mainstream grassroots consciousness of our beloved United States.

I suggest a clue to this frustration is to be found in *GCN*'s magnificent presentation on Palestine and the Intifada, appearing as the centerfold of the same issue, in Miranda Bergman's powerful sharing of her experience in people's homes in a Palestinian Village. She tells us that, looking at the newly self-liberating Palestinians through American eyes, one might assume that many women might be Lesbian. About her hostess, she says "The woman we stayed with loves women. All her close relationships are with women, but she doesn't identify that way." This is the key... "identity." When I was putting together, back in 1948 to 1950, what would become the FIRST Mattachine Society, there wasn't as yet in the minds of my fellow Queers, let alone the American society at large, even the beginnings of such a concept as that of a GAY IDENTITY. Everywhere we were constantly being told, in the press and on the radio, (we didn't yet talk about such things as "media"), in literature and in plays, in history and science and philosophy, in religion, and in medicine, (psychology is beginning to be heard from but isn't yet — in either the press or the courts — all that important), and in the courts, we were constantly being told that we were heteros who occasionally performed nasty acts... *But we were HETEROS, we were just exactly the same as everybody else (except when we perversely insisted on performing those degenerate and WHOLLY ILLEGAL acts).* True, early in the 20th century the pioneer psychologist Havelock Ellis had tried to introduce the term *invert*, and British social reformer Edward Carpenter had discussed the 19th Century German reformer Ulrich's concept of *Urnning* and offered his own mellifluous *Uranian*. But in the general social revulsions suffered by Anglo-American cultural sensibilities in consequence to the Oscar Wilde trials and subsequent sensations, neither Ellis' nor Carpenter's words were taken up by society nor yet did concepts deriving from these terms begin to take root. When I was in high school and college in the late '20s and early '30s, the term *homosexuality* was not contained as yet in any standard American dictionary. (While Oscar's London Aesthete Brothers enjoyed the *Love that dared not speak its name*, we West-Coast provincials, in the late '20s and early '30s *did not yet have a linguistically-recognized "name" to speak!*)

Establishing a Gay identity was what the FIRST MATTACHINE was all about in the McCarthy-ridden early '50s: broadcasting this identity far and wide, and beginning to display its wondrous applications, were what *ONE Magazine* and the Daughters of Bilitis's magazine *The Ladder*

were all about — touching to life the first quickening "Thousand Points of Light" of a burgeoning Gay America. The tremendous leap forward in consciousness that was the Stonewall Rebellion changed the pronoun in Gay identity from "I" to "WE." But each of these DAWNINGS OF CHANGE concepts, and communicable words for these concepts, *had to precede* the event. So it is that in Palestine, as in Eastern Europe and the crumbling Soviet Federation, as in the Third World generally, politically creative and imaginative women — like the Palestinian WOMEN IN BLACK — stand out from the blur of masses fumbling toward liberation. Enabled, it might seem, by hidden fires to speak out and to take action in the very teeth of terror and so, in our eyes, the perfect portrait of potential Lesbians. Perhaps these women, like the Palestinian women of whom Melinda Bergman spoke, have not yet emerged in their own minds and hearts from the more general *figure-ground* of HETERO women's liberation to discover that they carry a particular golden dream of social potentials, *and brand-new next-steps*, not necessarily shared by the hetero women who perceive themselves as partners of men.

Concerning the challenging issues to American Gays and Lesbians seeking to participate in support of the *INTIFADA*, and lend weight to the even larger issue of the new society the Palestinian Liberation seeks to create — "free of all forms of oppression," I whole-heartedly support Sister Jadallah's call to our American Gay and Lesbian Community to speak out. I would hope that our communities in every city will be joining their hetero neighbors and friends MARCHING FOR PEACE on March 25, 1990 — raising our collective voices against the U.S. or France or Britain or the United Germanies, or Israel or South Africa *INTERVENING EVER AGAIN IN CENTRAL ANYWHERE!*

But when it comes to our telling Third World communities — just emerging into Liberational consciousness — *what they should or should not* include in their agendas, here I think we should have to realize that our never-properly-examined hetero-imitative ethnocentric hangovers from our pre-coming-out-years are showing. Here, we very obviously have some serious homework to do...reviewing our imperialist culture's past record, and then perhaps share some heart-spaces for a bit. I would project that — in the 20th century years of the 2nd and 3rd Internationals respectively — the HETERO LEFT, perhaps with all the love and good intentions in the world, proceeded to solve the vicious oppressions of sexism and racism, by transforming WOMEN into *HONORARY Men*; BLACKS in specific, and all other PEOPLE OF COLOR in general, into *HONORARY White Men*; and recently GAYS and LESBIANS into *HONORARY White Heteros*. Then the Hetero Left proceeded to treat *all of us HONORARIES as from the core of a supposedly "shared" ETHNOCENTRIC SENSIBILITY... which none of us had ever asked for.* At least...had we Gays and Lesbians been consulted, we never would have consented to it in any way, shape or form. And, we project, neither would have any of the other "HONORARIES."

I suggest that before we start to denounce homophobia in cultures or in communities where the perceptions underlying the concepts do not as yet exist...that we have some heart-to-heart sharing to do first. Perhaps we even need to listen, instead to Third World communities, now just newly emerging into collective liberation. From Third World communities we ourselves might discern new dimensions about particular visions available to Gay and Lesbian sensibilities that we, heretofore, had never suspected. *After all, we Americans have been ourselves "out" to our sensibilities of our own Gay and Lesbian identities for only 40 years or less! Humble Pie, anyone?*

## GCN VACATION

GCN will be on vacation the week of April 23 to April 27. Our next issue will be distributed May 5. See you then!!!

disgusting. I question *GCN*'s acceptance of this "humor," and doubt that they would have printed a similar "joke" involving female sexual organs and a curling iron, for example.

There is a disturbing trend in the feminist (particularly lesbian feminist) movement to view gay men's sexuality as stupid, funny or even inherently violent. An excellent example of this mind-set appeared last year in an issue of *Lesbian Connection*. After the magazine printed ads for a lesbian pornographer, readers wrote in to decry the magazine's "acceptance of...profits from the junk sex industry," and went on to condemn the advertisers for being as "stupid... and violent as men."

The generalizations I have heard and read regarding the "violence" and "stupidity" of male sexuality are as damaging and oppressive as those perpetuated by Bush's traditional family expectations. Regarding men as slaves to their "weenies" is more than just rude, it is sexist. Thinking that the measure of a gay man is how many phone sex ads he responds to, or how many sex partners he has, or how many outfits he has, and so on, reflects an ignorance (if not disregard) for men as people. Sexist and homophobic generalizations (like those made by "Revoltng Lesbians") are not tools to create understanding and acceptance; they only re-open the wounds created by distrust between members of our common communities.

I am not naive. It is clear that within our communities bigotry exists, particularly in the form of the oppression of women and people of color. Gay men of all colors need to confront and deal with sexual bias, just as others must confront and deal with with society's "white privilege." I work, as do many other men, to eliminate bias, both personal and societal. To be reduced and referred to as the sum of our sexual organs by mebers of our own communities, lesbians or other gay men, is not "fitting the punishment to the crime," it is a completion of the cycle of sexual bigotry. It is certainly nothing to laugh at or be proud of.

In lesbian and gay solidarity,  
Joe Collins  
Binghamton, N.Y.

## Bagneris' loss? Not a surprise.

Dear *GCN*:

I must respond to your article in *GCN*, March 11-17, 1990, "No negatives involved, except the loss." The article discusses in rather glowing terms the failed candidacy of the first "Black gay city council candidate" for New Orleans, Louisiana. Of significance is the fact that District C, the district in which Larry Bagneris ran, is both heavily gay and almost half Black.

He did not win 40 percent of the vote as the article said, but rather, 36 percent. He got clobbered. It wasn't unexpected. I have lived and worked in District C for 11 years and I did not see the kind of enthusiasm for his campaign that the article suggests. One reason for this may have been that he addressed issues of importance to the gay and lesbian community only when he was in front of a gay and lesbian audience. You can still find people who voted in that election who did not know that Larry Bagneris was gay — not even a clue. It is true that the press did not bring the issue to the front, and that may be because his opponent never attacked his candidacy explicitly on the basis of his homosexuality. As the election drew near, she did get in a few well chosen knocks. Her full-page ads ran with the top third of the page earmarked for the capitalized words "TRADITIONAL VALUES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE." The middle third of the page was set aside for a family photo. Her message was clear enough. It was clearer than the message coming from the "Black gay candidate." He had no particular message for the gay and lesbian community in New Orleans. He just happened to be gay. It wasn't exactly galvanizing. He had even less to say to the city's Black community. He just happened to be Black. His connections to that community consist of a relative who holds public office. That provided him with name recognition. Not his full name nor his face was known to any significant number of people who make up this largely working class district. He was known to a few leaders of the Louisiana Gay Political Action Caucus and to family and friends. Given that his campaign both made no significant appeal to the Black or gay and lesbian community and blew an opportunity to bring our two communities closer together, it stretches the truth to refer to him as the

"Black gay city council candidate." Rather, he was a city council candidate who happened to be both Black and gay and chose to make very little of it. There are those who have attributed his loss to certain tax measures on the same ballot. That's just a lot of nonsense. There are clearly enough votes in District C to elect a Black gay candidate who speaks to the issues important to those communities. Larry Bagneris was not that candidate.

Sincerely,  
Glen Munroe  
New Orleans, La.

## Standing together, supporting survivors of sexual abuse

Dear *GCN*:

Pam Mitchell's "Strange bedfellows and strange politics" (*GCN* Speaking Out, Feb. 18-24, 1990) is a courageous and necessary statement that we all need to hear. As a supporter of survivors of child sexual abuse, I have worked with too many women who've been abused, yet again, by a person who was supposed to be helping. It's bad enough to be abused, but to be abused when you reach out for help, and then to have to pay for it, and then to be criticized for speaking out about it, is truly adding insult to injury.

What can we do about it? First, as always, we can believe the survivors who are brave enough to speak out. And then we can take an unequivocal stand against *all* professionals and helping people who abuse their power and position by overt sexual behavior or subtle covert sexual innuendo with clients. Let's not waver on this issue — it's of utmost importance in our integrity.

Thank you, Pam Mitchell, for being willing to speak out.

In the spirit of healing,  
Ellen Bass  
Santa Cruz, Calif.

## The Nazi heritage

Dear *GCN*:

Recently while doing some personal reading I came across this most shocking quotation:

"An adolescent male must be encouraged to fall in love with a girl of good blood; then he will turn away from homosexuals, will not participate in juvenile orgies of a homosexual nature. *If we don't encourage this correct heterosexual ethic, we will have sexually disturbed youngsters, not the right material for the elite SS, the new Holy Order.* It is essential for a nation to guide sex in the right direction."

— Heinrich Himmler, February 18, 1938, in Bad Toelz, the site of the elite SS training academy.

Need we search any further to discover where Congressman William Dannemeyer and Reverend Lou Sheldon are getting their ideas?

Tom Flint  
Seattle, Wash.

## Racism and fattism

Dear *GCN*:

I want to say a word of thanks and appreciation to *Sojourner, Gay Community News*, "V. Robinson," and "Ann" for their determined efforts to clean up the contemptuous racism and "fattism" of Glad Day Bookstore (*GCN* — December 24, 1989). It is so easy to avert the eyes, avoid the argument and say nothing, and that way lies disaster.

I cannot forget the words of Pastor Niemoeller:

First they came for the Jews  
and I did not speak out —  
because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the communists  
and I did not speak out —  
because I was not a communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists  
and I did not speak out —  
because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for me —  
and there was no one left  
to speak for me.

You have to wonder if the bookstore owner(s) isn't engaged in an unwholesome exploitation — letting it be known that his is a bookstore where lesbians and gays of all races can come to find the materials they want... and then take the opportunity to sneer and humiliate these same customers.

We know there are better bookstores that meet the needs of ALL lesbians and gays. Let's look for them; let's shop at them; and let's leave Glad Day to its own devices.

D. Mulhern  
Dorchester, Mass.



# Saliva

Continued from page 1

the fact that many public defenders and court-appointed attorneys know little about AIDS and HIV transmission, according to Greenspan.

Greenspan said she sees "an alarming trend" in the number of cases where people have been charged and convicted with more serious crimes simply because of their HIV status and cited several recent examples:

- Curtis Weeks, a prisoner in Huntsville, Texas, convicted of attempted murder in November of 1989 and sentenced to life in prison for spitting at a guard;

- Shaquita Johnson, a woman imprisoned in Gatesville, Texas, charged with capital murder in February of 1989, also for spitting on a guard;

- Adam Brock, convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to 15 years for biting an Alabama prison guard (Brock's conviction was overturned on appeal);

- William Brown, acquitted of attempted homicide, but convicted of aggravated assault for throwing feces at a guard in December of 1988.

Gregory Smith's statement that "if it happened to me, it can happen to anyone else who has AIDS" is supported by other cases, involving people who were *not* prisoners at the time they were charged:

- Madeline Rodrigues, a woman with AIDS in Minnesota, convicted of second degree assault in February of this year for spitting on a police officer;

- Donald Haines, a man with HIV convicted of attempted murder for biting police and spraying them with blood and saliva when they intervened in his attempted suicide. A lower court struck down Haines' conviction, but in October of 1989 an Indiana appeals court reinstated the conviction;

- Gregory Scroggins, a PWA in Georgia who was found guilty of assault with intent to commit murder for biting a cop during an arrest. It took only three days in October of 1989 to charge, try, convict and sentence Scroggins, who is now serving a 10-year sentence and has been denied bail (and medical treatment) pending appeal.

Scroggins is one of the few people whose case has been taken up by local AIDS activists, who are attempting to support him and publicly challenge his treatment. Judy Siff of ACT UP/Atlanta told *GCN* that Scroggins' case was a "railroad" of unbelievable proportions. She said the ACT UP chapter plans a support action at Scroggins' appeal hearing, which has yet to be scheduled. In addition, she said, the activists hope to challenge the AIDS-phobia and ignorance about saliva transmission that allowed Scroggins to be charged and convicted in the first place. To do so, the group has called for an educational rally and picket on May 19 in Marietta, the conservative Atlanta suburb where Scroggins lived.

Smith told *GCN* that he, too, is "trying to get a lot of support" for his case, especially from the gay community. He urged supporters to attend his sentencing hearing (where he faces a possible 30-year term) on May 18 at the Camden County Hall of Justice, Courtroom #34. A letter-writing campaign is also being organized on Smith's behalf. Anyone interested in more information can contact Greenspan at the National Prison Project, 1616 P Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036; or call (202) 331-0500.

□ filed from Boston

# Peptide T

Continued from page 3

cures for AIDS across my desk since the first of this year, but all I know is that, if the reports are so mixed, people wouldn't keep coming back for it." Woodruff told *GCN* that he currently supplies Peptide T to about 30 individuals.

Lana Paolillo, administrative director of Provincetown Positive, told *GCN*, "What I've noticed with people taking Peptide T is nothing but improvement in their health.... It would appear that there is some organized plot to keep Peptide T under cover."

Ken Mayer, research director at Fenway, said that there should definitely be more trials with Peptide T. Cautioning that it would be impossible to make generalizations about the efficacy of the drug, Mayer did say that some participants had higher amounts of T-helpers, and that there were also improvements in some physical symptoms.

"The drug appears to be well tolerated," he told *GCN*, "but you can't say anything

definitely.... There have not been 100 people in the world who have taken this drug."

Jerard Bossa, who is currently taking Peptide T, characterized his belief in the drug as "almost a blind faith.... I really don't think I'm taking snake oil though." Bossa told *GCN*, "I would hate to give anyone a false impression, but for me it's done something. I had a skin problem for one and a half years which is now under control. If I'm out of Peptide T for a day or two, my skin tends to start erupting again. As far as other claims and benefits are concerned, I don't know." □

# Teacher

Continued from page 3

one-third of the cases handled by the city's Human Rights Commission involved discrimination based on sexual orientation.)

MCAD investigates charges of employment discrimination based on a number of statuses, including race, age, sex and now sexual orientation. However, because of staff cutbacks at MCAD, it takes more than 13 months to resolve the average complaint. If a discrimination complaint is successful, MCAD can award monetary damages for back pay or mental anguish, as well as require educational programs and other action.

According to Nan Hunter of the Lesbian and Gay Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, there has been not been a discrimination case involving a gay or lesbian teacher for many years. "The disadvantage is that you're dealing with gay people and children, which is always a touchy subject," Hunter told *GCN*.

However, there is a legal precedent prohibiting teachers from being fired because of sexual orientation. Hunter said that in a 1974 case, *Acanfora v. Board of Education*, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Maryland ruled that a teacher could not be fired for being gay because of the equal protection clause in the U.S. Constitution.

In that case, however, the firing was upheld because Acanfora was charged with lying on his application for failing to say that he belonged to a gay group in college.

Bonauto declined to say whether or not Buckley will pursue a civil suit.

□ filed from Boston

# RU-486

Continued from page 3

from France, where it is treated in hospitals as if it were a narcotic and kept under tight security. She does believe, however, that the drug can be produced by laboratories outside of France. She cited Korean labs as a likely source of a "knock-off" drug, which would reproduce the exact appearance of Roussel-Uclaf product, down to the scoring on the pill, but may or may not be of the same quality as the "legal" RU-486.

Many activists feel that while RU-486 probably represents an improvement over illegal surgical abortion, it has significant drawbacks as a self-administered abortifacient. First, the drug is only effective until the seventh week of pregnancy, or three weeks after a missed period. Many women do not even know they are pregnant until after this point, especially young women who may miss periods regularly or may be unfamiliar with their bodies, and other women whose periods are often irregular, including drug users and women who are malnourished.

As with any kind of illegal abortion, use of RU-486 without access to doctors and hospitals creates the greatest risk to poor women. Underlying health conditions, poor nutrition, and anemia increase the chances of serious health consequences from using RU-486.

According to Barbara Herbert, a Boston activist and doctor, a significant number of poor women are anemic. "Those people who start out with a decreased amount of blood are the ones most at risk from a drug that induces bleeding. And the people who are most likely to have life-threatening bleeding are the least likely to have access to medical back-up," said Herbert.

Even so, Herbert believes that RU-486 probably represents an improvement in safety over an illegal surgical procedure. "The other advantage is that if a woman goes to a hospital with bleeding, she doesn't look like she's been instrumented — so she's not forced to tell the state that she attempted to abort. It does mimic miscarriage," she said.

"It's not that this is a dangerous drug — the problems with this drug are problems with society," said Herbert. □

# Dykes to Watch Out For





# book supplement

## The odd couple

Novelist Ellen Frye has created a compellingly-crafted historical novel set in the time of Sappho

### The Other Sappho

Ellen Frye  
Firebrand, Ithaca, 1989  
\$8.95 paper, 214pp.

Reviewed by Patricia Roth Schwartz

The one great archetype of human existence is that of the journey, central to all spiritual teachings as well as all true literature. Novelist Ellen Frye takes us on that journey with her slave girl protagonist Lykaina, the Spartan slave girl. Set out to die from exposure on the mountain top because of her lame foot, Lykaina is rescued and raised by a mother wolf, and returned to the harsh world of humanity where she must struggle that her song be heard. On one level, this compelling narrative is a historical romance, a colorful tapestry of a time gone by in which the author has endeavored to share her version of the lives of women-identified women who were our foremothers. At quite another, deeper place, Lykaina's story is our story: personal, contemporary, an example of the quest for identity and voice that the disenfranchised always make yet rarely find recorded. Frye here is not rewriting myth as some assume. Her prolegomenon is intended to be read as fiction not autobiography. Like all novelists she creates an airtight world of her imagining. We may assume that someone by the name of Sappho once lived, wrote unparalleled poetry (which was all but destroyed as patriarchy rose leaving only fragments as exquisite as bits of broken urns) and loved women. Whether she was like the character in Frye's narration is not really the point. Lykaina is a heroine for our time, not the larger conceit of hero-heroine we're used to from our junior high school-

books on Greek and Roman deities. As a member of a kind of underclass — an oral poet who has not received the schooling needed to record her poetry and songs through writing — Lykaina is at first accepted by the court of Sappho where she journeys after freeing herself from the death-in-life she would have had to eke out as a slave in Sparta. Yet her humble beginnings will always prevent her full entry into the polite and glittering world she finds there. And so will her origins prevent her full entry into the heart and soul of the woman who is at first her mentor and then her lover, the high caste Sappho, who burns with talent yet lacks the compassion and sensitivity needed to realize that a world exists beyond the cultured courtyards and lavish festivities where she reigns as queen.

Readers expecting a formula romance — Lykaina meets Sappho, loves Sappho and lives happily ever after — will be disappointed. Unfortunately, the quote on the book jacket — selected from one of the novel's erotic scenes — with no other quotations about the novel or the author may mislead many book shoppers.

Frye's insistence on the growth and emergence of her protagonist and her skill at revealing the twists and turnings of Lykaina's path brings this book far from the regurgitated pap of so much lesbian pulp fiction. Frye's skill as a wordsmith contributes to this end as well. Her first novel, *Look Under the Hawthorne* (New Victoria) prefigures *The Other Sappho's* themes in that stone-butched Edie and the gifted yet drifting Annabelle must each embark on a search, one for the daughter she put up for adoption, the other for her birth-mother. This likable book is well-done, yet it is in her



new work that Frye has begun to come into her power as a novelist. The writing, not unlike Sappho's own, is smooth and controlled, shining with a spare lyric intensity, never overly lush nor ornate:

Lykaina's heart jumped. The journey had taken so long that the goal had become almost unreal, a dream receding like an island into the sea.... The road crested a hill and began a steady descent. Through the trees they could now see the water kissed by both sun and wind. The trees thinned and a city appeared before them. The white-capped sea rolled up to a long breakwater.

In this way the prose brings us a sense of ancient Greece as much as any other aspect of the book. Quotations from Sappho's own verse plus Frye's renditions of lines in keeping with the period enhance the narrative considerably:

As the plains thirst for water  
as the mountains thirst for snow;

so I thirst for your laughter again  
and the light in your eyes.

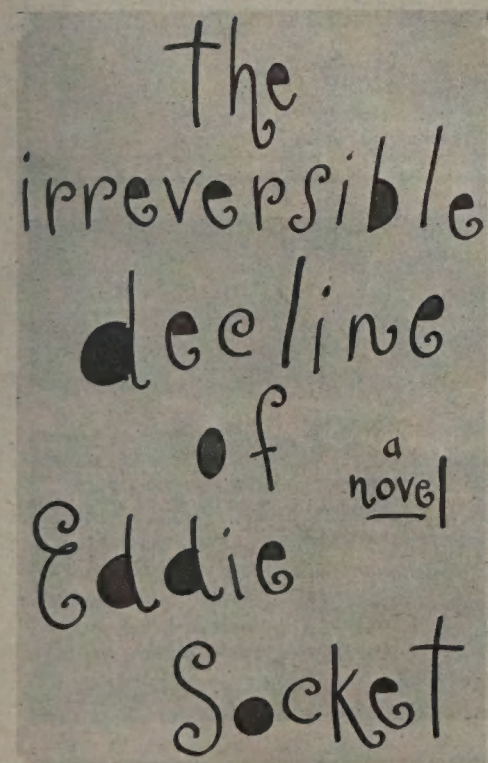
Frye's extensive knowledge of and travels in Greek culture (she has written a book on Greek folk music as well) help to bring the reader fully into the world she creates. Not only is there an accuracy about the landscape but an almost complete identification with the natural world that suffuses this whole work. The moon, the sea, the sky, the thyme-scented hillsides are part of Lykaina, Kissa, her small deaf protege, Maia, the old woman who becomes Lykaina's true mentor and guide (thus Frye has recreated a Triple Goddess motif: maiden, mother, crone); we as readers resonate with their reality as well. Animals — the wolf, the dolphin — are as vivid as humans here too, perfectly fitting for a time in which all of life was far more closely bonded than the way we live now.

*The Other Sappho* is ultimately a deeply spiritual work. As Lykaina slowly embraces

Continued on page 11

## Eddie on the verge

John Weir's *The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket* is a dark, disturbing, wonderful novel



### The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket

John Weir  
Harper & Row, New York, 1989  
\$17.95 cloth, 277pp.

Reviewed by Michael Bronski

Pity poor Eddie Socket, the eponymous hero of John Weir's wonderful new novel *The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket*. The product of a relatively normal middle-class home and a "good" college he, at 28, now lives in New York, the city of his dreams. This is what, it seems, he has always been waiting for, but to a large degree he still seems to be waiting. Waiting

for a lover, waiting for a movie, waiting for something to happen, waiting for his life to begin.

Eddie is always on the verge of discovering, or inventing, himself but he seems to have an instinct for whimsy rather than reality. For instance, his real name is Wally Jeffers, but he changed it to Eddie Socket to compliment his best friend and roommate, Polly Plugg. Eddie wants to be politically committed but the best he can do is wear a REAGAN YOUTH button juxtaposed on his gay/punk *haute couture* in hopes that passersby will understand. His leanings towards irony are mostly undercut by his compulsion for understatement. Even in conversation Eddie finds it almost impossible to be direct and is forever quoting movies, TV, books and pop songs and then demanding to be understood by asking "What am I quoting?" Eddie makes the foolish decision to fall for Merrit Mather, the boyfriend of his sometime boss, the high-queen Saul. Merrit is older, unctuous and uptight, as manipulative as Eddie is tentative, as cold as Eddie is filled with longing. A fine romance, indeed.

It is not as though Eddie is living the unexamined life, he is *always* examining and scrutinizing his actions and feelings. It is just that generally these examinations don't have much connection to reality — but rather the un-lived life. Eddie always has the feeling that his life is just about to begin, he is not so much the perpetual adolescent as the arch-romantic who will not admit to reality even as it is staring him in the face.

The first third of *Eddie Socket* reads like a comic novel of naive love and unthwarted innocence. Like Stephen McCauley's *The Object of My Affection* or Patrick Gale's *Kansas in August*, it raises serious issues with ease and grace. But Weir is using the genre to probe a little deeper, unsettling us a little more than we might expect. His presen-

tation of Eddie's world is a critique of a certain hip emotional and political insouciance. Eddie's feigned indifference, his casual affect, his refusal to really take a stand, are all a reflection of what he experiences as a new, more liberated, world. It is a world that does not have to respond to history or reality. A world that is post-modern, and post-political, that does not really respond to change and which, for the most part, cannot affect your life. Unfortunately it is not a world which is post-AIDS.

AIDS permeates *The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket* the way that it permeates all of gay male life in New York; it lurks around corners, behind nods and smiles, beneath innocent remarks and sentences. "So anyway" thinks Saul — Merrit's lover —

the phone rings, six o'clock this morning.... Right away I know another person died. It's the wake up call. It always comes at six o'clock. It never means a visitor from out of town, or an obscene phone caller rising early, or my mother back from the dead just checking in. It can only mean death, and I don't have to hear it to know how it goes. "Hello Merrit? This is Tom: I just got a call from Jim who spoke to Richard, who just spoke to Luis who was in the room with Peter when Claudio —" and it's the whole gay community inside your phone receiver at dawn, rehearsing the chorus that begins "I just got a call," and ends with a pause, a dash, the word left out, the crucial word. That the space for you to fill in yourself, to tell yourself the words in whatever way you prefer — he died, or he expired, or he smoked his last, or he crossed the River Styx to meet Saint Peter at the pearly gate.

And it is this sense of AIDS — sometimes unspoken, but never far from consciousness — which circumscribes the world in which Eddie, and his friends, live. It is also the world in which *The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket* attempts to find meaning, to explicate. For unlike Eddie, John Weir knows that there are consequences to everything — that reality cannot be avoided — and that affect and understatement are not political positions but avoidances.

Although *The Irreversible Decline of Ed-*

*die Socket* begins as a comic novel — and maintains this to a slighter degree throughout — it is essentially a dark, disturbing book. This is not to say the novel is a tragedy, although Weir certainly sees Eddie's life (and his inability to come to terms with it) in tragic terms. Ultimately Eddie, and his circumstances become less important than the responses of the other characters. What Weir is after, and what the book is always seeking, is to find some meaning in AIDS, some reason that will explain the pointless suffering, the incoherent pain. Eddie's quirky mother, his deeply religious father, Polly, Merrit and especially Saul are all left trying to make sense out of Eddie's life and out of their relationship with him, out of AIDS. And, as in life many times, there is little sense to be made.

We turn to art (for lack of a better word) many times to find the "meaning" that so often eludes us in life and the most satisfying of the new genre of AIDS stories — TV films like *Andre's Mother*, novels like David Feinberg's *Eighty-sixed*, even Sarah Schulman's *People In Trouble* — give us that something to hold on to, some haven of comfort in a heartless world which might allow us to think that the situation is not hopeless, not pointless. But Weir isn't interested in such easy sentiments and *The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket* — in a rather remarkable act of literary courage — tells us that in relationship to AIDS "meaning" is hard to come by and emotional and philosophical comforts are meager indeed.

*The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket* is beautifully balanced between the pathos of its non-hero's un-lived life and the horror of living in the middle of an epidemic. This juxtaposition dislocates the compulsion to find a "meaning" in AIDS: it removes its importance and does not allow us to become sentimental in our thinking. The considerable charm and style of *The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket* is matched by its unrelenting and disquieting examination of not only how AIDS affects us daily, but also how we think about it.



# Piercy now and then

An unabashed Marge Piercy fan feels betrayed by the feminist writer's *Summer People*



Marge Piercy in the old days.

## Summer People

Marge Piercy  
Summit Books, NY: 1989  
\$19.95, 380pp.

Reviewed by Maida Tilchen

**S**ummer People came out last summer, but I was so angry after I read it that I was unable to deal with writing a review of it for the last six months. I don't believe book reviews should contain a lot of personal stuff about the reviewer, but in this case I just have to explain: Marge Piercy has been my favorite living novelist and my role model for a political writer since *Small Changes* was published in 1972. I have read every word of her published fiction and essays, most of it several times. I have happily gone to many of her public readings, reviewed her books, and have even argued with many people in support of her 1978 novel *The High Cost of Living*, which many people consider her worst and I consider her best and my favorite post-lesbian-break-up novel. I have also read her husband Ira Wood's wonderful *roman a clef* about her, *The Kitchen Man* (1985). Often when I'm in Central Square, Cambridge, I imagine that I will see Piercy's *Small Changes* characters heading down Pearl Street, perhaps for a visit to the "Going-to-the-Sun" women's commune.

I hope this will explain the degree of my disappointment and outrage about her latest novel, *Summer People*, in which Piercy betrays most of the ideals she has supported in her previous novels. She blasts bisexuality, alternatives to monogamy, class struggle, multiculturalism and political art. If this novel was meant to be ironic, I must have completely missed that, because Piercy seems to mean what she is saying, right up to the happily-ever-after ending with her heroine pregnant and heading for marriage with a Nice Jewish Guy, leaving behind the unresolved tragic collapse of her 10-year sexual triad with a male-female married couple.

It is Piercy's presentation of the triad that is most shocking, because back in the '70s her poetry was one of the places feminists found encouragement for alternatives to monogamy. To be honest, encouragement seemed to be all Piercy provided. I recall searching her poetry for some practical "how-to" stuff, and finding no practice but lots of perfectly worded theory. In *Summer People*, the triad of Dinah, Susan and Willie seems totally sex-driven, in fact it seems to exist solely so its members can get double the sex. As many lesbians have learned, twice the lovers usually leads to twice the "processing" instead. But Piercy's trio seems to have spent 10 years having sex and not talking, because when Susan abruptly (and for no specified reason) dumps Dinah, the three — in any combination — are so unable to communicate that it's clear they've never developed a healthy degree of intimacy. This version of a triad may fit some people's fantasies, but it bears no resemblance to the feminist ideals and expectations that Piercy has portrayed in previous writing.

The inciting incident of *Summer People*, which could be called "When Susan Dumped Dinah," is a nasty and stereotyped

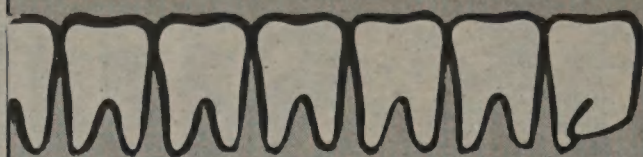
presentation of bisexuality. Susan's sudden decision to completely cut off Dinah, her insistence that her husband Willie do the same, and her effort to restore their marriage to a traditional one is nothing but that stereotype of bisexuality: "She'll leave you flat for a man." Later in the book — having recovered somewhat from the shock of the break-up — Dinah takes up with a man, never considering involvement with other women even though throughout the book she is presented as being into women sensually and erotically. The only reason I could deduce for why Dinah turns to her new lover Itzak is that in the triad, she had Willie, a butchy guy, and Susan, a femme-y woman. In Itzak, her sensitive man of the '80s, she has a femme-y guy. It would be nice if personality, not gender, mattered, but speaking for myself, I know lots of femme-y guys and still prefer women exclusively. Am I saying that lesbians shouldn't go straight? No, I'm just offended by Piercy's stereotyping of bisexual women as either irresponsible toward women lovers or just waiting for the right man.

In *Summer People*, Piercy deals with issues of class difference, a major theme in all her novels. In her earlier books, her protagonists are often from the cusp between poor and working class. They grow up in families with too many kids, too little food, and no resources for education and upward mobility. Piercy protagonists such as Bernie and Leslie in *The High Cost of Living* hustle and grovel to get college educations and escape poverty. But in *Summer People*, the class conflict is between the very, very rich, who own summer houses on Cape Cod and winter houses elsewhere and the "winter people" Dinah, Susan and Willie, who also own houses on Cape Cod but have to stay there even when it's cold outside. Sorry, this just isn't the class struggle I care too much about. Okay, maybe if their houses didn't have space for gardens and artists studios and didn't sit on a pond in the woods — no, I still don't think it's a real oppressive drag they don't get invited to the "summer people's" cocktail parties.

Another typically Piercy aspect of *Summer People* is its presentation of artists. The feminist guerilla theatre troupe in *Small Changes* is unforgettable — tooooo '60s, but what a vision: vibrant, current, tuned-in, changing the lives of women. In *Dance the Eagle to Sleep*, music is the center of the young people's rebellion against a fascist society.

In contrast, the artists in *Summer People* are totally self-centered and self-serving, cut off from any apparent community. Even Dinah recognizes that Willie's anti-war sculptures were out of date when Nixon left office. Dinah herself only gets recognition as a composer because Itzak, a man with power in the music world, gets the hots for her. And poor Susan, a fashion designer who can't afford to leave her backwoods home, is ridiculous. Being so isolated and self-absorbed, they don't represent any political or artistic trends. Nonetheless, Piercy seems to want us to feel sorry that they aren't getting those nice grants so they can keep up the mortgage on the woody

Continued on page 11



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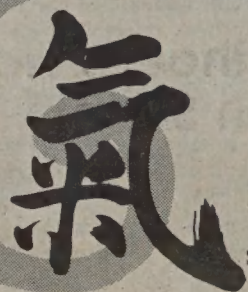
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# Death never speaks

Two books of poetry by pioneer gay activists

## These Waves of Dying Friends

Poems by Michael Lynch

Monotypes by Douglas Kinsey

Contact II Publications, New York, N.Y.,

\$5.00 paper, 94pp.

## John

Poems by Ron Schreiber

Jointly published by Hanging Loose Press,

Brooklyn, N.Y. and Calamus Press, New

York, N.Y.,

\$8.00 paper, 94pp.



Reviewed by Charley Shively

These poems of experience speak directly from the field. *John, Poems by Ron Schreiber* is a desert journal in poetry and prose of the time between Ron's lover's "diagnosis (4-10-86)" and death "(11-5-86)." *These Waves of Dying Friends, Poems by Michael Lynch, Monotypes by Douglas Kinsey* is dedicated to Bill Lewis (18 March 1950 — 17 September 1987). Lynch's serenity has sharp edges: "Equanimity/like an ungainly growth/in-side your chest absorbs/the deaths of friends, of people you know only/to see, of thousands you never saw." Schreiber *lo mismo*: "when they carried John out of the/house (on his way to Holbrook) he/looked up at me as they put him in/the ambulance & screamed 'Ron! Ron! Ron!' then they closed the doors,/his mother with him, & drove off."

Both Ron Schreiber and Michael Lynch have been pioneer gay activists. Schreiber was early active in Boston's Student Homophile League (where I met him in 1970) and introduced one of the first Lesbian/Gay literature courses into the University of Massachusetts/Boston English Department (which he chaired during the writing of this book). He has had seven poetry books published. Lynch has been one of the chief organizers of the Modern Language Association Lesbian/Gay Caucus and is himself a leading Walt Whitman scholar. He is professor of English at the University of Toronto and has long been active in Toronto gay liberation.

Their experience and talents are never used to shield the authors from the bereavement now upon us. As Lynch writes: "Leave eloquence to those who haven't lost/their first half-dozen friends." And Schreiber's "closing in (9-23-86)" wraps the deaths and funerals of Mauricio Gaston and Jim Everhard into his care for John. Awareness of death has been heightened among gay males at the same time we have become scapegoats for the straight society. We are all, as Schreiber notes in one poem, "official scum, & they just/ don't care about junkies/& niggers & queers." They have equated gayness with death and then say: "Well, I'm not gay so I must *not* be dying." AIDS, as Mitzel has observed, is the disease straight people love to talk about.

The relations between writing and dying have never been easy. Death never speaks. A silence, a void, an unknown confronts both the dying and the surviving. And those not dead live continuously inside the contradiction of simultaneously dying and surviving. "Who's not busy being born is busy dying," hides an awareness that birth itself is a form of dying. Michael Lynch's "Prayer" concludes on just the right note of celebration, resignation and revolt:

And after the parties, at Close of  
Night? Give me  
a man with the skill to answer  
this prayer: make me anonymous  
as an herb in an unwalked  
field under skies so vast  
the sun is neither lamp nor car.

Touch my face with your open hands,  
man of air, confirm these lines  
with the tips of your fingers as a breeze  
confirms the sage. Wipe away  
their names and past. Pull me  
to your chest and make me suck nipples  
that yielding  
nothing give me all I need.

The bed unites so many lives: birth, sexual contact, death. Some die in their boots; some have sex in their boots. But these are the happy few and almost everyone is born naked without boots. Lynch's eloquent poem for his mother, "Tobacco" celebrates both birth and death. He began on Tobacco

Road named for the plant that supported and killed his mother: "What we live by kills us — tobacco or heat or love or early darkness/indistinguishable, really, from late light."

Ron's journey with John centers on the bed along with home/housework. Although a visiting nurse suggests his kitchen floor could use more wax, everyone needs to take to heart the lessons in "the treat people and the care people (2)."

"john's eating," they say. but  
I frown, imitating John. "he's  
not gaining weight any more,"  
I tell them. "but he's eating,"

they rejoice, "he's keeping it  
down." then the treat people go

home. I'm already home. I give  
John a morphine suppository

when they leave (for he's in pain,  
which he denied when they were here).

later, in the middle of the night,  
I give him another suppository, but

this time I have to get rid of the  
pellets of shit that come out (the

results of his eating, the only  
results) so the morphine is

absorbed & he won't scream out in pain  
again for hours.

Part of the drama of dying is appearing not to be dying — a great (but perhaps necessary) strain both for the dying and their caregivers. But the toll is pitiless for the workers: Ron concludes "I haven't climbed a mountain;/ John's done that, but the/ mountain has climbed me."

Both Ron Schreiber and Michael Lynch refuse to surrender to doctors, pharmacists, supreme courts or preachers. Ron Schreiber explains that "the men who run things/— who appropriate money or/preach from pulpits — don't/see themselves at risk." And Michael Lynch ends his book with documentation of the demonstration, October 13, 1987, against the United States Supreme Court.

We want you all beside on these steps,  
this other dancefloor, gloved fists in the  
air  
defying the empowered who deny  
our lives and deaths, our fucking, and our  
hate.  
We too can organize, and camp  
inside whatever colonnade. We should  
have known  
we're tough, our fist in the yellow kitchen  
glove  
transformed by the outer fingers in the  
air. □

Contact II Publications, Box 451, Bowling  
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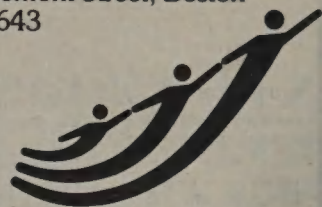
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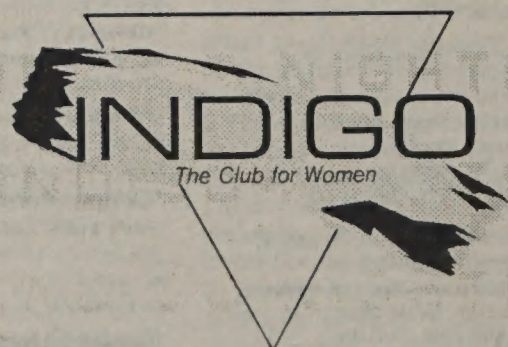
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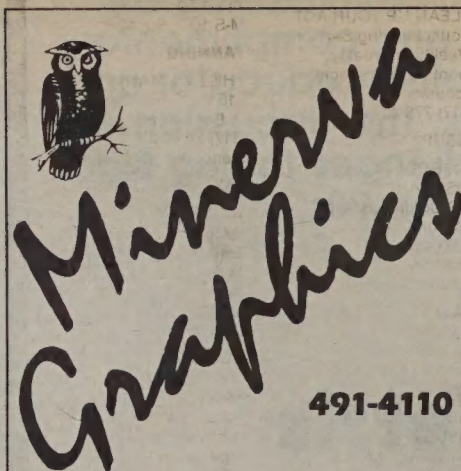
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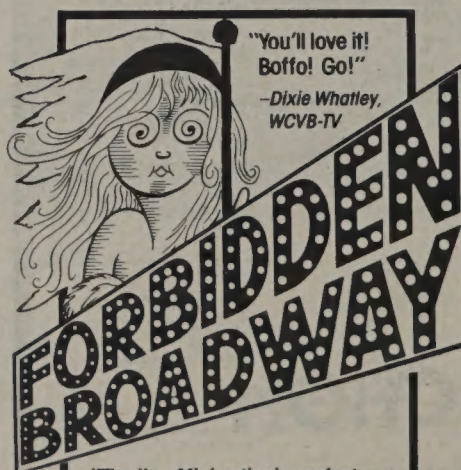


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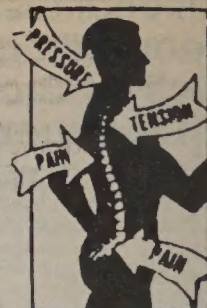
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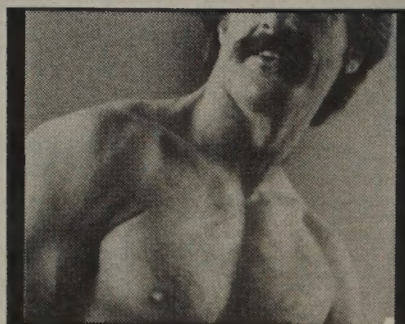


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# A dazzling parade of celebrity names

## Memoirs of a Bastard Angel

Harold Norse

William Morrow, New York, 1989  
\$22.95 hardcover, 448pp.

Reviewed by Duncan Mitchell

I remember seeing copies of the City Lights edition of Harold Norse's *Carnivorous Saint* around in the '60s, but I think I was put off by the title, being uninterested in saints, carnivorous or otherwise. Later I read the *Gay Sunshine* interview with Norse, and found them both interesting and amusing. Interesting because I hadn't grasped, when I'd read about W.H. Auden's American milieu, that Norse had been an intimate of Chester Kallman's; amusing because Norse could go from rhapsodizing about Moroccan boys' total lack of hangups about homosex ("the sex 'problem' as we know it does not exist" among them, he claimed) to griping about their annoying hangups about homosex: "three orgasms a week, no kissing, and you can't fuck them.... This is how they probably justify their masculinity to themselves — by not allowing themselves to enjoy it *too often*." But when *Love Poems* was published by The Crossing Press in 1986, I bought it (because I'm impressed by anyone who published gay poetry as long ago as 1940), read it, and enjoyed it. And I was glad for the chance to review Norse's memoirs.

Harold Norse is a poet, and a good one, but as a prose writer he's about on the level of the "as told to" people to whom celebrities tell their careers. (For example: "To say that I was not awed would be a bold-faced lie.") Moreover, *Memoirs of a Bastard Angel* contains so many amazing howlers that it seems barely to have been copyedited or proofread. Take Norse's comment on his rich uncle, for instance: "A less unlikely Stalinist would be hard to find" — I think he means "*more* unlikely" here, no? Most of the time, though, I was so dazzled by the parade of names through Norse's life that I didn't care how he wrote. He seems to have been not only part of Auden's milieu but everyone's. One night he picked up a scared teen-aged Allen Ginsberg, riding the IRT into Greenwich Village to cruise for Whitmannic angels; he shared a Provincetown cabin with Tennessee Williams while the latter wrote *The Glass Menagerie*; he was an unrequited love of James Baldwin's; he went drinking with Dylan Thomas on his American tours; he was initiated into opiates by William S. Burroughs; listened to the Pan pipes of Joujouka with Paul Bowles; and worked out in a Santa Monica gym with Arnold Schwarzenegger. He did seances with Julian Beck and Judith Malina; invented cutups with Burroughs and Brion Gysin; and at Robert Graves' behest the Sufi teacher Idries Shah tried, unsuccessfully of course, to "cure" Norse of homosexuality. Anais Nin, the Duke of Windsor, E.E. Cummings, Paul Goodman, Leonard Cohen ... the cavalcade of stars winds through *Memoirs of a Bastard Angel* like a conga line. (Unlike a lot of memoirs, by the way, this one has a thorough index, making it easier to track your favorite celebrity through Norse's life.)

*Memoirs of a Bastard Angel* is not a book to read for its style or sensibility (like, say, Isherwood's *Christopher and his Kind*), but for its glimpses into American, European, and North African gay and literary life in our times. Just imagine that the garrulous, slightly boozy old man who sits down next to you at the bar one night and starts telling you his life story turns out to have known and slept with just about everybody you've ever heard of — and is a major American poet to boot. And maybe if enough people buy Norse's *Memoirs*, Morrow will break down and publish his *Collected Poems*. □

# Sappho

Continued from page 7

the path of The Great Goddess, Frye writes superbly of ritual. This is a difficult task, yet the book's sacred sense lies in more than that: Lykaina's emergence from the anguished howl of her beginnings into the full expression of her own personhood through song, her choice to refuse the easy comforts

and sweet corrupting love of the courts and bed of Sappho for the rough hillsides, her own strength, and the chance to help women like herself honor themselves and the music they can make, is an emblem as much for our own troubled age as any other.

Finally, the volume itself is a work of art, a treasure for the keeping. Ginger Brown, a talented artist whose work is also currently appearing on covers from New Victoria, created the illustrations that set off the text: the small phases of the moon that head each right-handed page and the highly-detailed pen-and-ink motifs from nature and Greek period art that begin each chapter are nicely-done, well complemented by the general design of the book and choice of type. The cover, resplendent in red, black, white and gold, of a graceful woman on a shapely urn set against a black-and-white background patterned like a woven cloth or rug causes the book to fairly jump into the reader's hand. To travel back into a time that has tantalized in myth and mystery seek out *The Other Sappho* — and yet end up riding the spiral deep into your own center. □

Patricia Roth Schwartz is the author of a 1989 Lambda Literary Award Finalist, *The Names of Moons of Mars, a volume of short stories which was also selected as one of 75 small press titles to be included in an international traveling exhibit.*

# Summer

Continued from page 8

hideaways. Even if their work was nothing but Jesse Helm's worst nightmares, I don't think they should get a cent when they're so self-isolating. I think publicly-funded art should support a connection to a community.

And community is one more Piercy theme that she seems to want to demolish here. A recurring image in her work is that day when "we'll all sit down at the table" and enjoy the good life of a just society that as political activists we (and most of her protagonists) have worked for. In *Fly Away Home* a suburban wife ends up in a family of inner-city friends fighting arson. In *The High Cost of Living* — for a little precious while — Bernie, Honor and Leslie celebrate together as they struggle with poverty and powerlessness. But in *Summer People*, Dinah is going to marry Itzak and live in a big winter house in Brookline.

Piercy as a poet is very popular with feminist Jews, and her poetry is often read during worship services. Her novels have shown her sense of Jewish identification developing. As much as I respect and identify with that, I was disturbed by the conclusion of *Summer People*, in which Dinah ends up pregnant by and expecting to marry a Nice Jewish Guy. There is an implication that Itzak is the right lover because he's a Jewish man, that some harmony in the world is restored because she's given up women and non-Jewish lovers. Additionally, Dinah sees her baby as the fulfillment of her family's dreams and legacy, as if her reproductive choices belong to history and not herself. This is quite a change from Piercy's scathing book about reproductive freedom, *Braided Lives*.

I don't know why Piercy published this novel. It's as if she deliberately knocked over all her own icons. It's not that I feel art must be politically correct, it's more that I feel so betrayed by a writer I admire so much. For years she did what so many writers dream of: combining an active political life with actually writing and publishing novels — novels that turned her experiences in politics and relationships into art, by presenting characters who embodied the lives of the people she met in her political work.

In the future, when people want to know what the American Left was like from the '50s to the '80s, they'll probably be reading most of Piercy's novels. (In fact, I just saw a brand new high school American History text book that lists *Small Changes* as a "suggested reading" about contemporary issues.) But if *Summer People* is her current and future direction, it will be a great loss. I don't know why she's cut her admirers off like this. If she's personally practicing heterosexuality and monogamy, why trash bisexuality, and alternatives to monogamy? Why trivialize class differences? Why ignore the political roots of art? Why romanticize the nuclear family over community? There are so few writers who have combined artistic talent and social justice politics as Piercy has. I've finally finished my review, but I still feel terrible. If anybody has a different way to look at this book, I'd love to hear about it. □



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For persons with AIDS  
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An evening of comedy with

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Revolutionary Acts! is a woman owned, woman operated production company.

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8 p.m. Paine Hall  
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Every day lesbians and gay men are harassed or assaulted just because of who we are. If it happens to you, WE CAN HELP:

- negotiation with the police & courts, including victim's compensation;
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- documentation of anti-lesbian/gay violence

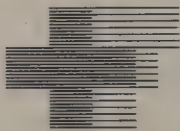
Even if you don't need the services,  
HELP US DOCUMENT THE PROBLEM

The services of the Victim Recovery Program are not limited to anti-lesbian/gay violence. If you have been a victim of ANY violence or harassment, we can help.

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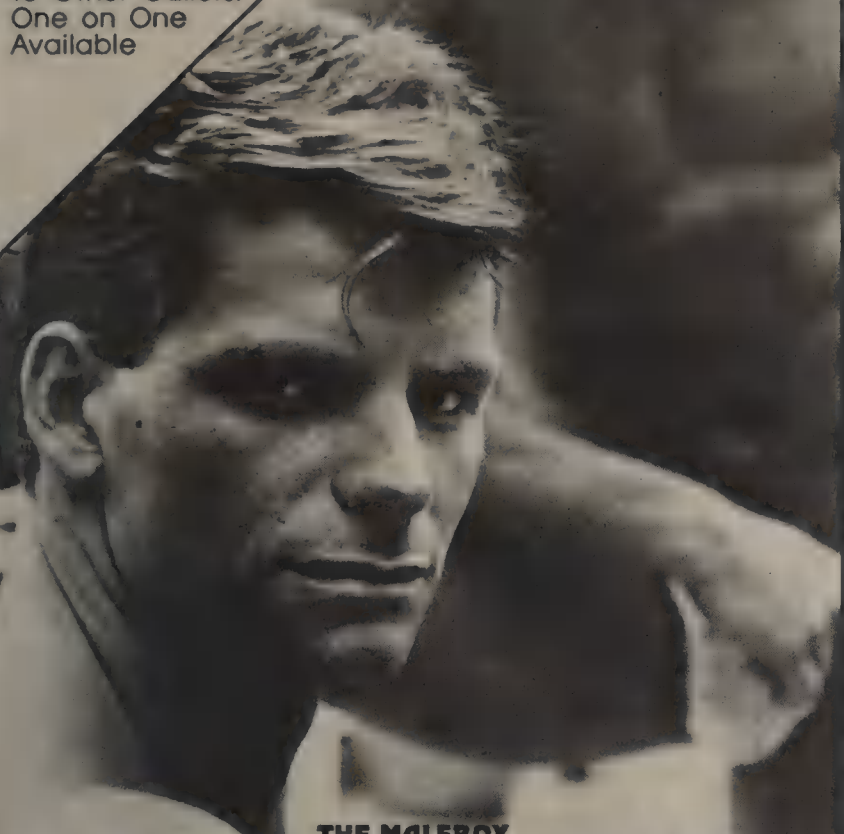
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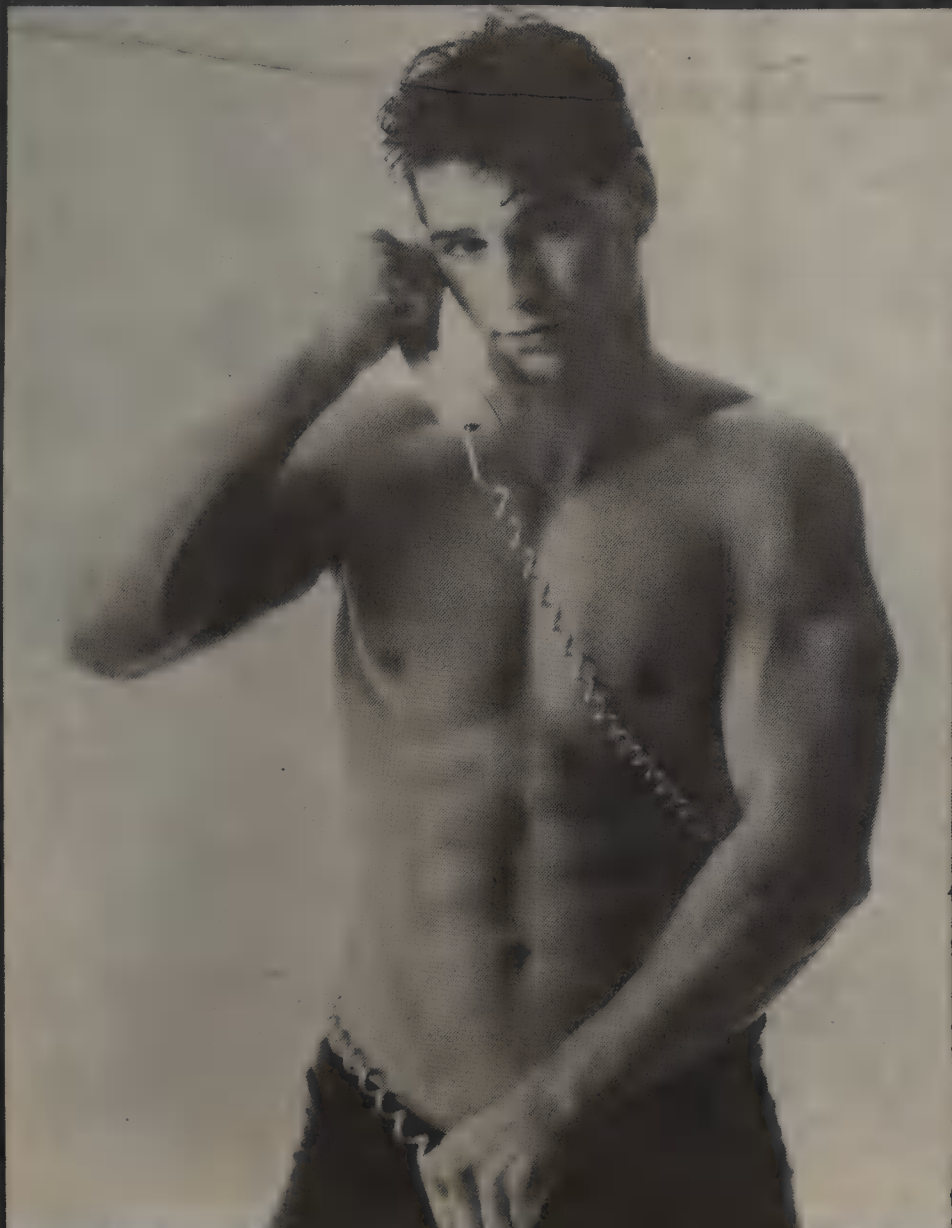
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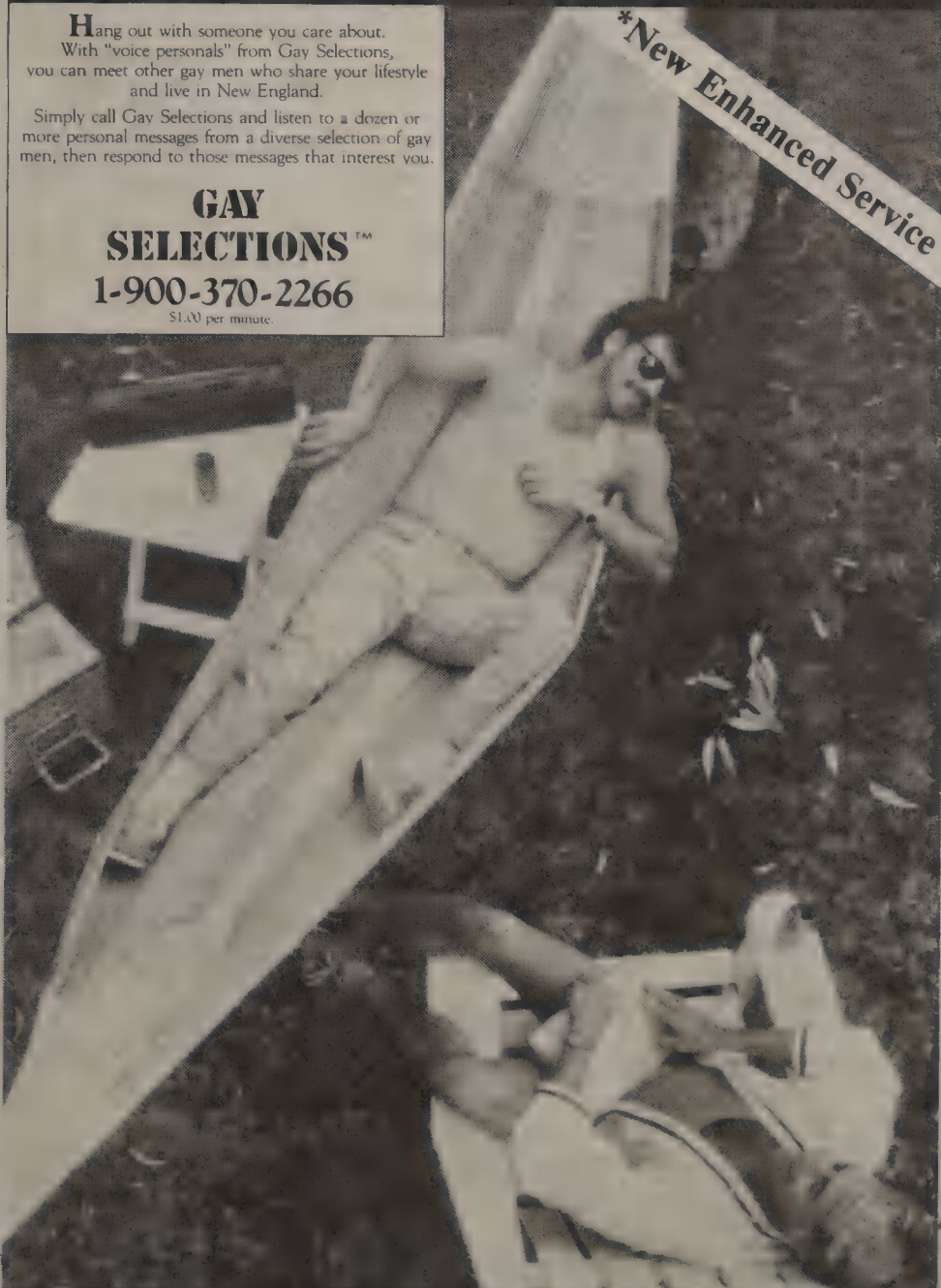
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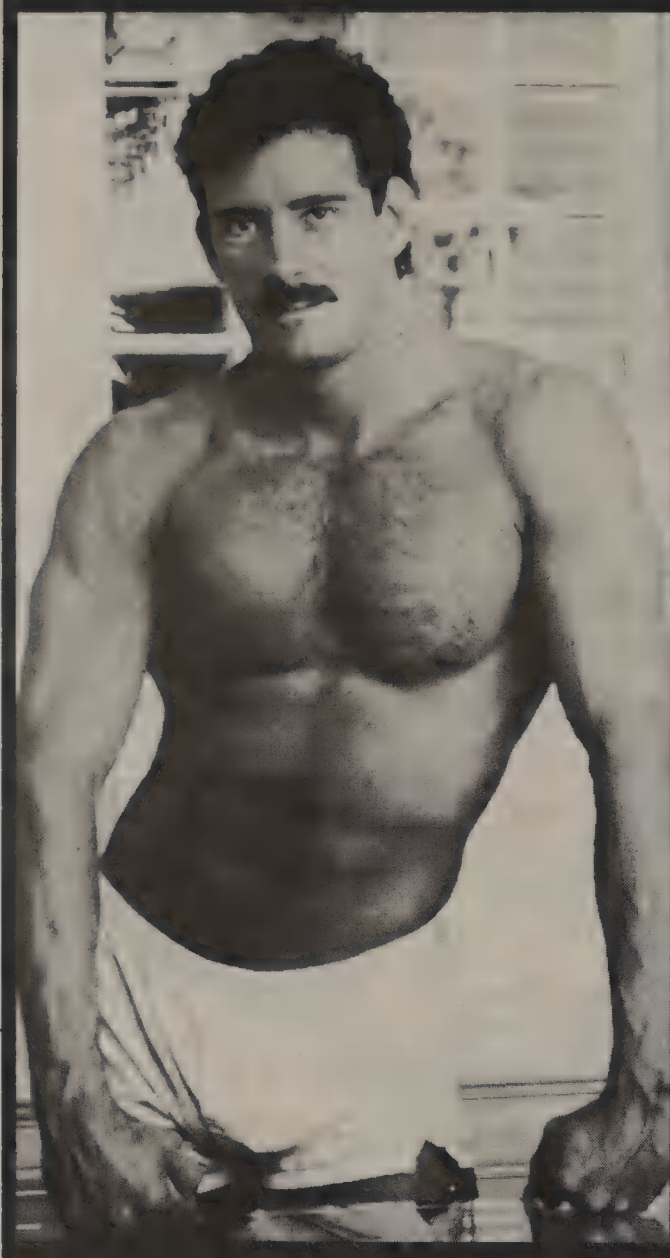
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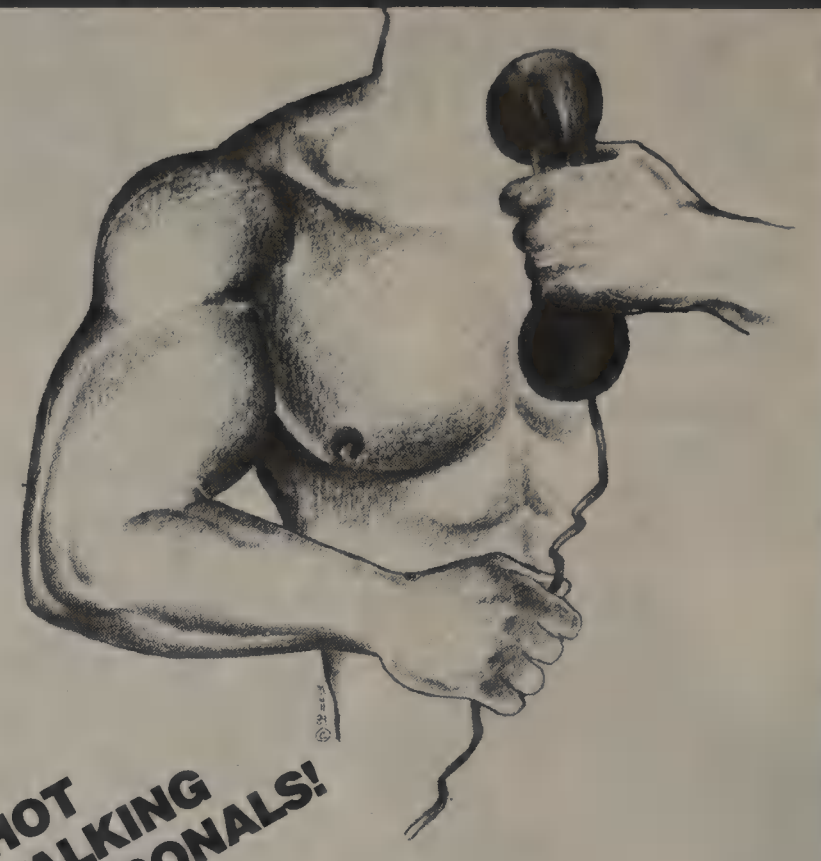
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#### EXECUTIVE EDITOR

OUT/LOOK, national lesbian and gay quarterly, 20-30 hrs/wk. Magazine, political activism, volunteer coordination experience necessary. Acquisition, editorial development and manuscript editing. Send resume and letter: OUT/LOOK Job, 2940 16th Street #319, San Francisco, CA 94103. No phone calls. (40)

#### FIGHT FOR GAY/LESBIAN RIGHTS!

Are you politically motivated/outgoing? Join Human Rights Campaign Fund's canvass staff and help build grassroots pressure on Congress for lesbian/gay rights. Make \$15-\$25 per hour. Contact HRCF, P.O. Box 1723, Washington, DC 20013 or call (202) 628-4160. (40)

#### PROFESSIONAL

Professional carpentry 12 years. experience, references. Additions, decks, re-modeling, custom shelves, platform bunk beds, kitchen, bathroom, re-models, repair work. Also painting. Call Pam Bearden (603) 286-8798. (40)

#### ASSISTANT STORE MANAGER

The Arlington Food Co-op is looking for an Assistant Store Manager. This position's primary responsibility is managing the produce and dairy departments. Applicants should have experience working with produce and/or perishables and with supervising other employees. Any other retail or food experience would be helpful. Hire by June 1st. Please send resumes to the Arlington Food Co-op, P.O. Box 497, Arlington, MA 02174. (40)

#### BOOKKEEPER

The Arlington Food Co-op seeks a full-charge bookkeeper. Part-time position, 8-12 hours per week. Computer familiarity is required. Hire by May 1st, 1990. Contact Beth Imhoff at 648-3663. (40)

#### SHIPPING

Packing and shipping books, some other responsibilities, for gay publisher. Full-time. Non-smoking office. \$6/hour plus benefits. Phone Tina at Alyson Publications, 542-5679. (40)

## ROOMMATE WANTED

### GOING AWAY AND HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR APARTMENT?

Responsible couple, 2GF, looking for inexpensive summer sublet or house-sitting situation. Will rent apt. or one room in apt. Will even pet-sit for right price. Need parking. Call Adrianna 426-8752 or Laura (401) 421-6454. (40)

#### SMOKE-FREE LF FOR CAMB/BELMONT

Cozy 2BR apt nice neighborhood. Near T, parking. Laundry in building. Rent \$300 incl heat, hw. No pets, sorry. Call 864-4314. Leave message. (40)

#### GREAT COOP HOUSE SEEKS 3 F/M

any age, race, affectional preference. Move in date flexible but prefer by 6/1. 8 bedroom beautiful spacious house and garden. Now 4F/4M ages 31-57. Share chores, vegetarian meals, house meetings. Nonsmoking. For 10 years we've lived safely and harmoniously in Uphams Corner, Dorchester. Near T. \$250 plus \$50 utils. 265-7479. (40)

#### INMAN SQ/CAMBRIDGE

LF plus two cats seek warm, independent 28-plus GM or LF. Spacious 6 room, sunny apt. with fireplace and porch; near T. \$400-plus. Short term or part time welcome. No smoking, drugs, or more pets please. 868-1553. (40)

LF grad student seeks F for 2BR apt in Somerville. I smoke — you don't have to. No compulsive neatniks or total slobos. \$275-plus. Avail June 1st. 628-9772. (43)

#### SOMERVILLE DAVIS SQUARE

2 GW owners of 3 bedroom house seek working, friendly, outgoing individual for \$300 plus util. We are rebuilding old house. Women who are handy should reply. (617) 628-1868. (41)

#### SOMERVILLE — DAVIS SQ

2F's seek 1F (28-35) for semi co-op in Somerville. Fun, nice'n neat house. Owners of nice house \$300 per month plus utilities. Call 628-1868. (41)

#### JP HOUSEHOLD SUBLET/LONGTERM

3 LFs seek 1 or 2 LFs/Bifs. Big, pretty apt. near Pond/Arboretum. Friendly, independent. Kids welcome. Sorry, no pets/smokers. Light alcohol/drug use. For 4 \* \$335 plus utilities. 522-9760. (41)

2LF seek 3rd for large apt in house. JP near T. 340-plus. Avail. 6/1 maybe sooner. Call Nicki 522-5540 or 484-0705. (41)

Davis Sq. on T, 1/2-house, large rooms. You get bedroom and studio/study, share rest with LF clean, smoking, non-veg. artist. \$325/month plus util and sec. dep. Lisa 625-2159. (40)

Share gorgeous Newton House. 2 bedrooms for gay men. W&D, exercise equipment. \$350. 527-2819. (40)

Sublet avail. May 21-July 8. Sunny, comfortable 2BR apt. with study in JP. No pets. 3rd flr. \$850 incl. 522-7218. (41)

LF artist seeks LF 25-plus to share apt. in JP. Steps to Arboretum, bus, and orange line. No smoke, have dog and cat, no more. \$375-plus avail 6/1. 524-6839. (40)

#### 2ND & 3RD FLOOR IN E. ARLINGTON

2LFs seek 3rd for spacious sunny house — yard, porches, laundry, off-street parking, own phone line. No smk/pets. \$400 plus utilities. Call 648-0970 or 646-6607. Leave message. (40)

#### SALEM, MA:

GF 28-plus to share 2 bedroom apartment, 2 bath, fireplace, porch, parking. Includes heat and utilities \$350. Call (508) 744-1960. Leave message. (40)

#### LF & GM SEEKING ROOMMATE

For politically incorrect pagan household in Somerville. DW, W&D, on Orange line. \$260-plus utilities. 628-7744 9am to 9pm. (40)

#### SUMMER — SUMMER...

Lesbian looking for dyke, faggot or couple for cheap Harvard Sq. apt from May 1 through August. Large sunny room \$265.00. Call Jude at 354-7457 (40)

#### MISSION HILL

GWM seeking roommate for 2 bdrm apt. \$300-plus. No drugs or smoking. 445-9722. Immediate occupancy. Washer and dryer. (40)

#### 5 DYKES IN JP

Collective lesbian household seeks LF over 25 to share irreverent fashion intervention and apple pancakes. Feminists vegetarians activists. Spacious home near green and orange Ts, pond and great ice cream. Rent a mere 241.67-plus. All this and more. Call Today: 524-0821. (40)

#### THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Progressive coop home near Central Square in Cambridge seeks funky and irreverent housemate. Semi-veg. No cigs or cats. Flex move in date. \$375 includes all. 864-1466. (40)

2LF's and 1 Bif seek another for sunny, spacious Porter Sq. home. No smokers, min. drugs or alcohol. We have 1 cat. \$350-plus. 491-4005. (40)

Newton, Upper Falls. LF looking to share two bedroom apt. Large bedroom available. Cat OK. \$350.00 heat and utilities included. Call 969-7939. (40)

Independent, friendly, political household in Cambridge seeks 4th woman 25-plus. Semi-veg. No pets, drugs, smoke. Avail. April 1st. Cheap rent. 497-7828. (40)

3 LF seek 4th Belmont 4BR, spacious hardwood floors, fireplace, off-street parking, bus-line. 25-plus friendly independent, no smoke, no drugs. \$280-plus. Sara or Sandy 484-8527. (40)

Lesbian Roommate wanted for friendly, tidy, small, cute, inexpensive (275 inc ht & hw) household in Som. nr. Camb. Flexible, comfortable envr. with one other lesbian and cat. Great for modest income artist, activist, student, or young person. 628-0614. (40)

#### WOUBURN

#### 20 MIN FROM BOSTON

Roommate wanted non-smoker, prefer someone in a 12-step program. Rent \$300 includes heat and utilities. Call 932-6318. (40)

#### LOFT SPACE

3 GF and cat seek 4th for artist's household. Your room 900 sq. ft., 18 ft. ceilings, hardwood floors, wood-burning stove. \$357/mo plus key fee. Share kitchen and bath. No drugs, heavy drinking. 542-0024 (40)

#### PORTER SQUARE

G cple seeks roommate for bdrm avail. May 1, in 5 rm. apt. near T, w/d, \$375.00 (util incl.), call 776-1487 (40) LF to share sunny 2BR Dorchester apt near T and stores. Pets are fine, smoking isn't. \$275-325-incl utilities. Call 265-4258. Available May. (40)

## SUMMER RENTALS

#### PROVINCETOWN CONDO

Two bedroom, four room, 1 1/2 baths, parking, deck, water views, washer/dryer. \$7500 May 15 to Sept 15. \$2900 July or Aug., \$775 per week. (508) 356-7452. (40)

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Condo with loft, sleeps four, kitchenette, parking, private patio, heated pool, cable TV, beach access. \$350/week June, \$450/week July. Call (508) 369-2872. (42)

## VACATIONS

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With 19 charming rooms, 100 scenic, mountain acres, heated pool, hot tub, miles of walking trails, yummy breakfasts, peace and privacy, we're your perfect vacation choice! All summer sports and spectacular fall colors too! THE HIGHLANDS INN, Box 118G, Bethlehem, NH 03574, (603) 869-3978. Grace and Judi, Innkeepers. (18.24)

#### WATERSHIP INN

Rustic cozy inn one half block from Provincetown Harbor, free continental breakfast, parking, most rooms private bath, 7 Winthrop Street, Provincetown, MA 02657. (508) 487-0094. (42)

## PUBLICATIONS

#### LESBIAN CONTRADICTION

A Journal of Irreverent Feminism. Quarterly of commentary, analysis, reviews, cartoons & humor by and for women who agree to disagree—who are still political, but not necessarily correct. Sample \$1.50; sub. \$6; more if/less if. LesCon, 584 Castro, No. 236G, SF, CA 94114. (18.35)

With incisive reporting and thoughtful analysis **IN THESE TIMES** offers the very best in alternative American journalism. We've built our reputation on addressing the issues the mainstream media ignores, and that's why our unique point-of-view has been trusted by thousands of readers for over a decade. Why not see for yourself? You may order a subscription by calling 800-435-0715 (in Illinois call 800-892-0753) or by writing to **IN THESE TIMES**, 1912 Debs Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. (17.36)

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Lively, down-to-earth feminism in the nation's oldest women's newsjournal. Analysis, reviews, conference coverage, and news — on health, feminist theory, reproductive rights, civil rights and political work among working, disabled, incarcerated, old, and poor women, women of color, lesbians and women from every continent, \$15/11 issues. \$6 plus \$1 postage. 2423 18th St. NW, Washington, DC 20009 (ex)

**WOMEN OF POWER:** "A Magazine of Feminism, Spirituality, and Politics," an inspiring international quarterly publication. Subscriptions \$22 for 4 issues; single issues \$6 plus \$1 postage. P.O. Box 827, Cambridge, MA 02238, telephone (617) 625-7885. (ex)

#### ON OUR BACKS

The sexual entertainment magazine for lesbians, is 49 pages of erotic fiction, features, plus timely sexual advice and news columns. We are quarterly, national, unique and provocative. \$28/year sub/\$6 single issue. **ON OUR BACKS**, 526 Castro, San Francisco, CA 94114 (ex)

#### BREAKTHROUGH!

Political journal of Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, Spring 1989 issue. Women of the Philippine Revolution — Interview with Makibaka; The Post-Feminist Mystique; speech by PISD (People with Immune System Disorders); Crack and Black Youth. \$3 including postage. John Brown Book Club, POB 1422, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Do you need facts about menopause? Does the stereotyping of older women make you angry? Do you want to be part of an Older Feminists Network? **Broomstick**, a bimonthly national magazine by, for and about women over forty. Annual subs (US funds only) U.S. \$15, Canada \$20, Overseas and Institutions \$25. Sliding scale available. Sample copy \$3.50. 3543 18 St. #3, San Francisco, CA 94110.

#### WOMEN'S REVIEW OF BOOKS

monthly review of current feminist writing. Since 1983. Our readers span the U.S., Canada, and abroad. Subscriptions: \$15/U.S., \$18/Canada, \$25/institutions. Free sample on request. **THE WOMEN'S REVIEW**, Wellesley Women's Research Center, Wellesley, MA 02181. (ex)

#### BLACK/OUT

Special 10th Anniv. edition of **Black/Out** now available. This bi-annual magazine from the National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays contains essays, reviews, poetry, news and announcements concerning the Black Lesbian and Gay community. Sample copy \$6 plus \$1 postage. 1 year subscription (2 issues) \$10 to **BLACK/OUT**, c/o NCBGL, 19641 West Seven Mile, Detroit, MI 48219. (ex)

## Prisoners Seeking Friends

### IF YOU WANT PEACE, WORK FOR JUSTICE

#### JERICHO Newsletter!

A Kansas prisoner has started a prisoner newsletter and would like some outside editorial support from someone interested in prison reform: a few hours a week answering mail, xeroxing material, etc. If you are interested, please write: Michael Stephens, 45625, Box 2, Lansing KS 66043. [The situation with prisons has to change in this country. It's a timebomb. These inside-outside support efforts are a very good beginning. Please consider it.]

#### LOVE & RAGE (AMOR Y RABIA)!!

New revolutionary anarchist news-monthly, **FREE** to prisoners (but they'd love to see a few bucks to help out; they're poor of course) Send for your copy to: Love & Rage, Box 3, Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012.

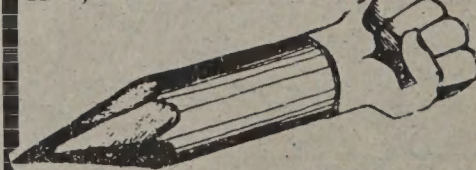
#### Prisoners writing other prisoners:

OK, we'll try again, to put together a list of state prisons which do NOT allow 'their' prisoners to get mail from other prisoners. We are doing this so that prisoners don't waste precious postage writing others who can't write them back. This is a way we have of helping each other out.

**PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR STATE IS ONE OF THESE.** (Also, be careful, some rules may apply only to prisoners in 'isolation' etc. Check before you send us your info.) **THANKS!**

**Jailhouse Lawyers Manual** is on sale now for \$8 (for prisoners). This includes 4th class postage (4-6 weeks). (First class delivery price is \$10.50). Send check or money order to: Columbia Human Rights Law Review, Box 54, 435 West 116th St, New York, NY 10027.

**URGENT ACTION!!** The Urgent Action Network of Amnesty International consists of people from every walk of life —including prisoners—who agree to be on call to write letters on behalf of prisoners in urgent situations. For more info write: Urgent Action Network, Amnesty Int., Box 1270, Nederland CO 80466.



27 yr old GM actor, nice guy, formerly from Boston, into AA, travel, theatre and the beach. Would like to write a friend. Richard POPE, 83528-012, Box 4000, Springfield MO 65808.

GCN friends, THANK YOU for the paper, and if you ever get LONELY, please feel free to drop me a few lines and tell me a little bit about yourself and to ask anything you would like to know about me. Stay sweet, Charles THORNTON, 047208 (5C-222), Box 900, Jefferson City MO 65102.

I'm 19, a very rare person who has made a mistake and would like to write some people interested in fun exciting sexy letters and poetry and art. Mark DAVIS, 52894, 2605 State St, Salem OR 97310.

Lonely male prisoner seeks correspondence with anyone! Interests include: poetry, drawing, reading, writing, and philately. Have pictures. Will answer all. H. James WALKER, 167363, Box 56, Lebanon OH 45036.

Hello out there! I'm a young GM, looking for penpals and will answer all letters. If you're lonely too and want someone to write to, please feel free. Tommy Howard GANDY, D-34332 Rm F3-14-225U, 480 Alta Rd, San Diego CA 92179.

#### BAD ATTITUDE

A lesbian sex magazine. Irreverent and Hot! \$12 for one year's subscription (3 issues). B.A. Inc., P.O. Box 110, Cambridge, MA 02139. (16.33)

## ORGANIZATIONS

#### LESBIAN & GAY PENPALS

For a listing of penpals across the U.S. and Internationally, send \$5.00 along with a brief description of your interests to: **THE LAVENDER PEN**, P.O. Box 1234, New York, NY 10276. (40)

#### OLDER LESBIAN ENERGY

Social and support group for women over 40. P.O. Box 1214, East Arlington, MA 02174. (15.48)

#### BLACK AND WHITE MEN TOGETHER

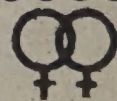
Multiracial group for all people. Call (415) 431-1976 or write BWMT, suite 140, 584 Castro St. SF, CA, 94114. (16.1)

#### BOSTON ALLIANCE OF GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH

Social support group for youth 22 and under. Wed. night general meeting from 7:30-9pm. New persons meeting at 6:00. Women's meeting at 6:45. Call 1-800-42-BAGLY for info. (15.32)

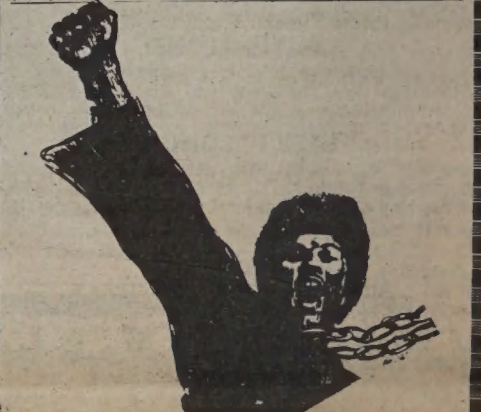
#### MAN/BOY LOVE

Intergenerational Love Support Group. World wide news, art, opinions. Application, information free. Bulletin \$1.00 NAMBLA, P.O. Box 174, New York, NY 10018 (7)



I received your GCN sample copy and I do very much like it. I would also like to ask for a penpal. My interests are writing poems, drawing, weightlifting, basketball and music. I'm looking for gay women I can share my time with. Denise SANCHEZ, 85G 245 (114 D-21 Honor floor), Box 1000, Bedford Hills NY 10507.

30 yr old, very attractive Italian, great sense of humor, athletic, dominant in sex, looking for an older woman to share with. (Can't write other prisoners.) Robin LUNCEFORD, 160885 (607), PO Box 8540, Pembroke Pines FL 33024.



Gay man looking for friends, not money. Interested in swimming, laying around in the sun and bowling. I am a believer in NAMBLA and would like to hear from others that are also. Will answer all, prisoners or free world. Randy MEIBURG, 387931 Wynne A4-2-24, Huntsville TX 77349.

I've been tested positive for HIV and my lover of several years has quit visiting and I would like to start a penpal club for us gay prisoners who need friendship like we need medicine. Dwayne SINGLETARY, 071505 (405), 1150 SW Allapattah Rd, Indiantown FL 34956.

I'm 28, and would enjoy writing some of the GCN readers. I can get mail from prisoners too. I want to help GCN and gay prisoners when I get out (in 1992) and help you keep doing the great job you're doing. If no one else says it, then I'll say, "THANKS"! It means a lot to us! Steve SLATON, 52902, 2605 State St, Salem OR 97310.

Please place my name in your penpal listing. Any help you give me in reaching outside of this madhouse to make some friends who are willing (glad, even!) to write, would be much appreciated. Everyone in prison is not out to run scams etc. I'm a very political gay man and have about 2 years to go. Thank you for everything. Nyati BOLT, 72821, CCR-C-Tier 1, LA State Prison, Angola LA 70712.

Hello Guys and 'girls' (TVs and TSs)! Want to get to know a very nice guy from Brooklyn? I'm fun to play with, financially secure, but in need of friends and hoping (of course) to meet that special someone too. All letters will be answered Can and will write prisoners too. Patrick MOONEY, 85A 3856, 135 State St, Box 618, Auburn NY 13024.

BM 25 seeks correspondence with drag Queen or other gays for friendship or possible relationship. Prefer Drag Queen. Johnny CURRY, 111118, Camp D Eagle 4, LA State Prison, Angola LA 70712.

I'm a gay (half Italian) male prisoner, 30, certified paralegal, and would like to correspond with a serious minded (non-game playing) person. Photo of you will get one of me in drag. Wendell LEE, 399488, Box 4500, Tennessee Colony TX 75861.

My dick is light and filled with a creamy delight. My balls are tight and my rectum is just right. Why don't you rush me a kite (letter). Michael McKINNEY, 02596-000, 902 Renfroe Rd, Talladega AL 35160. [Remember: Federal prisoners, like Michael, can't receive mail from other prisoners, whether federal or state. Also remember: the way to tell a federal prisoner (usually) is by their number, which always has the following form: 5 numbers, followed by a dash, followed by 3 more numbers; for example, 02596-000. Make a note of it so you don't waste your postage writing federal prisoners, if you're a prisoner.]]

I'm a gay 26 yr old Black male prisoner looking for a dominant type person that likes natural things and living life. I enjoy all outdoor activities, reading and music. Thank you. Charles RUSSELL, C-34387, SHU-C-11, PO Box 7500, Crescent City CA 95532.



# Calendar



**4 Friday** ☐ **No Turning Back:** A forum to discuss strategies for fighting the anti-gay referendum. Speakers to include Amber Hollibaugh (pictured right). At Bartos Theatre, MIT. 7:30pm. \$3-\$5 donation. For more info call 868-7838.

**Calendar listings must be received by the Monday before the week of the event. Photos encouraged. Please specify if event is/is not wheelchair accessible and/or sign language interpreted. Please use our format as a guide for listings and put each event on a separate sheet. Listings must be typed. No phone calls, please!**

## 21 Saturday

**Boston** ☐ **Country Western Dance.** For HIV-positive community and friends. At Boston Living Center. 140 Clarendon St. 7pm-12am. \$2 donation. For info 236-1012.

**Medford** ☐ **Comedy with Sarah Cytron.** At Tufts University, Pearson 104. 8pm. For info 629-2818.

**Boston** ☐ **Prime Timers.** Organization for older gay males, monthly meeting, speaker: Barney Frank. At Lindemann Health Center. 25 Staniford St. 2-4pm. \$1.

## 22 Sunday

**Marlboro** ☐ **WOBBLES: West of Boston Lesbians.** Climbing trip to Mt. Monadnock. For more info (508) 386-7737.

**Boston** ☐ **Am Tikva: Boston's Community of Lesbian and Gay Jews.** Yom Ha'shoah Service. At MIT Chapel, across from 77 Mass Ave. 1pm. For info 782-8894.

**Jamaica Plain** ☐ **Freedom Trail Band.** Benefit concert proceeds to build wheelchair ramp at First Church. Centre St. 2pm. \$5 suggested donation. For info 424-7025.

## 23 Monday

**Boston** ☐ **ACTUP Demonstration.** To demand coverage for AIDS treatments. At Prudential Building. Boylston St. 11:30-1pm. For info 49-ACTUP.

**Cambridge** ☐ **The Supreme Court and the Right to Die: The Case of Nancy Cruzan.** Panel discussion with Marcia Angell, Charles H. Baron, and Susan Wolf. At the Hastings Center. Zero Garden Street. 7:45pm. For info 489-1452.

## 24 Tuesday

**Boston** ☐ **Buddy Program Orientation.** At AIDS Action Committee. 131 Clarendon St. 7:30pm. For info 437-6200 x256.

**Boston** ☐ **Safer Sex Playshop.** At Boston Living Center. 140 Clarendon St. 3pm. To register 267-0900.

## 25 Wednesday

**Springfield** ☐ **Gayness/Oppression/Homophobia.** A seminar "Gay Games III: An Arts and Athletic Festival". At Springfield College. Locklin Hall, rm 233. 7pm. For more info 788-3221.

**Cambridge** ☐ **Hope is not a Method.** Training to teach birth control. At Planned Parenthood. 99 Bishop Allen Drive. 3-6pm. \$25. For info 492-0518.

## 26 Thursday

**Boston** ☐ **HCHP Patient Advocacy Union.** First meeting. At AAC. 131 Clarendon St. 7pm.

## 27 Friday

**Cambridge** ☐ **Kay Gardner in Concert.** Proceeds to benefit FCHC. At Harvard, Paine Hall. 8pm. \$15, \$20. For info 267-0900.

**Medford** ☐ **Barney Frank Lecture.** At Tufts University, Cabot Auditorium. 3pm.

## 28 Saturday

**Boston** ☐ **Learn the Ropes Day.** Intro to rock climbing by Stonewall Climbers. For info 623-1584.

**Boston** ☐ **So Sad, So Sorry, So What.** Documentary chronicling the life of a recovering addict, an inmate and a PWA. At Boston Film/Video Foundation. 8pm. \$4, \$5. For more info 536-1540.

**Jamaica Plain** ☐ **A Night in Bahia II.** Afro-Brazilian food, live music and Lambada lessons. At Firehouse Multicultural Arts Center. 659 Center St. 8pm-12am. \$8. For info 524-3816.

**Boston** ☐ **Music and Healing.** Workshop with Kay Gardner for PWAs and friends. At Arlington St. Church Chapel. 10am. For info 267-0900.

**Boston** ☐ **The Dance.** Sponsored by Boston Living Center and Positive Directions. At BLC. 140 Clarendon St. 9pm-1am. For info 236-1012.

## 29 Sunday

**Boston** ☐ **12th Annual Auction.** By Mass. Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus. At Club Cafe. 209 Columbus Ave. 6pm \$3. ASL interpreted. For info 522-3446.

**Salem** ☐ **First Annual Gay Fathers of Greater Boston Banquet.** At McGowan's. East India Square. 6:30pm. \$20. Info 232-0535.

**Boston** ☐ **Leather and Lace.** Fundraiser with entertainment. At 119 Merrimac St. 5pm-12am. \$2. For info 322-6318.

**Amherst** ☐ **Alison Bechdel.** Slideshow presentation. At UMass. Mahar Auditorium. 7:30. \$6. For info (413) 545-4824.

## 30 Monday

**Boston** ☐ **ACT UP Rally to support Petide T trial Participants.** 4:30-6:30pm. For info, location 49-ACTUP.

## 2 Wednesday

**Waltham** ☐ **Conference on Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment and Assault.** At Brandeis University. Sherman Conference Center. ASL interpreted. For info 736-3740.

## 3 Thursday

**Cambridge** ☐ **Communicating Interculturally About Sexuality and Family Planning.** Training. At Planned Parenthood. 99 Bishop Allen Drive. 3-6pm. \$25. For info 492-0519.

**Boston** ☐ **The Inner Web.** Opening night of play to benefit Boston Living Center and FCHC. For info 236-1012.

## 4 Friday

**Cambridge** ☐ **No Turning Back.** Forum on fighting the anti-gay referendum, with speakers. At Bartos Theatre, MIT. 20 Ames St. 7:30pm \$3 donation. For info 868-7838.

## 6 Sunday

**Cambridge** ☐ **Laugh 'Til You Drop.** Comedy by 11 Women. At Indigo. 823 Main St. 3-6pm. \$6. For info 497-7200.

**Boston** ☐ **Light and Laughter.** Reading by Kate Rushin, Sharon Cox and Craig Harris to benefit The National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays. At The Center, 338 Newbury St. 1-3pm. \$7more/less is okay.

## WEEKLY EVENTS

### Saturday

**Boston** ☐ **Lesbian Fun and Games.** Smoke and alcohol free. At The Center. 338 Newbury St. 7-10pm \$2 donation. The third Saturday of the month.

## Sunday

**Cambridge** ☐ **Lesbian Soccer Team.** Seeks new experienced players. For practice/game schedule 661-6771.

**Boston** ☐ **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth (BAGLY).** Open to youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. 2-5pm. 523-7363 or 1-800-42-BAGLY.

**Boston** ☐ **The Gay Dating Show,** WUNR 1600 AM. 10:30pm-2:30am. Lesbians and Gay Men.

**Boston** ☐ **ALATEEN Group** open to lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, 22 and under. 338 Newbury Street, rm. 202k. 6pm-7:30pm. Dave, 629-2518 or Frank, 666-8912.

**Somerville** ☐ **GLOSS: Gays and Lesbians of Somerville and Surroundings.** Monthly potluck. 71 Union Sq. 6pm. First Sunday of each month. For more info Lisa 628-2532.

## Monday

**Boston** ☐ **Monday Night Rap Group.** Talk to others living with HIV. 38 Appleton St. 7:30-9pm. For info 694-0964.

**Boston** ☐ **Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights** holds bi-weekly planning meeting. The Center, 338 Newbury Street. 7pm. 776-6956.

**Worcester** ☐ **AIDS Project Worcester.** A support group for family, friends, concerned others dealing with HIV. 305 Shrewsbury St. 7-8:30pm. For info 755-3773.

**Cambridge** ☐ **Lesbian Rap Group.** Topics: 4/23 Same sex vs. opposite sex communication. 4/30 Sex. At Women's Center. 46 Pleasant St. 8-10pm. For info 354-8807.

## Tuesday

**Boston** ☐ **Lambada Dance Class.** Tuesdays and Thursdays. 128 A Tremont St. 4th fl. 6pm. For more info 576-1018.

**Boston** ☐ **Brazilian Dance Class.** Tuesdays and Thursdays. 128 A Tremont St. 4th fl. For more info 576-1018.

**Boston** ☐ **Gay Fathers of Greater Boston** meet 1st and 3rd Tues. of the month. Lindemann Ctr., 2nd fl. 8-10pm. 742-7897.

**Boston** ☐ **Lesbian and Gay Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals.** No audition necessary. At Mass College of Art. Longwood and Brookline Ave. 7:15pm. For info 266-0628.

**Providence, RI** ☐ **ACT UP/Rhode Island** open meetings. Rocket, 73 Richmond St. 7pm. 273-7228.

**Boston** ☐ **ACT UP/Boston** meets to confront the AIDS crisis. The Center, 338 Newbury Street, Rm. 203. 7pm. 49-ACT UP.

**Cambridge** ☐ **30-plus Lesbian Rap** Topics: 4/24 Addiction to 12-Step Programs. At Women's Center. 46 Pleasant St. 7-8:30. For info 354-8807.

**Cambridge** ☐ **Women For Sobriety,** a self help group for women recovering from addictions. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8-9:30pm. 354-8807.

**Arlington** ☐ **Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays** meets on the second Tuesday of every month at First Parish Unitarian Church, 630 Mass. Ave. 7:15pm. Info: 547-2440 or 508/562-5807.

**Boston** ☐ **Boston Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays.** 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month. Harriet Tubman House. 6:30pm. For info 825-2610.

**Medford** ☐ **WMFO 91.5.** Community talk radio show with Sheila Parks. 7-9am. Tufts University radio.

**Worcester** ☐ **Support Group for HIV-positive Gay/Bisexual Men and Their Significant Others.** Closed meeting. At AIDS Project Worcester. 305 Shrewsbury St. 7-8:30pm. For info 755-3773.

## Wednesday

**Boston** ☐ **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth.** Open to youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. New persons' meeting 6pm; women and men meet separately 6:45-7:30; general meeting at 7:30pm. 523-7363 or 1-800-42-BAGLY.

**Worcester** ☐ **Supporters of Worcester Area Gay and Lesbian Youth**7. Open to gay and bisexual youth 21 and under. Meets 1st and third Wednesday of month at United Congregational Church. 6 Institute Rd. 7pm. For info (508) 755-0005.

**Cambridge** ☐ **Say it, Sister!** WMBR, 88.1 FM. 7-8pm. 4/25 WINGS: Women's International News Gathering Service with news from around the planet.

**Cambridge** ☐ **Lesbian Al-Anon** with childcare, wheelchair accessible. At Women's Center. 46 Pleasant St. 6:30-8pm. For info 354-8807.

## Thursday

**Boston** ☐ **The Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights.** Meets alternating Thursdays. At The Center, rm 202K. 338 Newbury St. 6:30-8pm. For info 828-3039.

**Amherst** ☐ **UMASS Program of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Concerns.** 4/26 Film: La Ley del Deseo. At Campus Center. 7pm. For info 545-4824.

**Northampton** ☐ **Valley Gay Alliance** meets 1st, 3rd Th. every month, basement of the Unitarian Church, 22 Main St. 7:30pm. 413/527-5310.

**Stoneham** ☐ **Incest Survivors Group** for women. New England Memorial Hospital, 5 Woodland Rd. 5-6:30pm. Sara Epstein, 979-7025.

**Boston** ☐ **Boston Area Rape Crisis Center** drop-in group for women who have been raped. 492-RAPE.

**Cambridge** ☐ **Non-offending male sexual abuse survivors** group meets first Thursday of every month. Cambridge Ctr. of Commerce conference room, 859 Mass. Ave. 8:30-10pm. \$5 donation. 498-9881.

**Boston** ☐ **GLAAD: Boston Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.** General meetings 2nd Thursday of the month. The Center rm 202. 338 Newbury St. For info 492-4639.

## Friday

**Watertown** ☐ **GLOW: Gays and Lesbians of Watertown.** For more info 395-4664.

**Worcester** ☐ **AIDS Project-Worcester support group** for HIV-positive people, PWAs, PWARCs, supporters. Open to all lesbians, gay men. 51 Jackson St. 7-9pm. Dana 508/755-3773.

**Brookline** ☐ **"Swingtime".** Lesbian, gay bisexual swing dance lessons. First Friday of the month. 185 Corey Rd. 8:30-9:15. \$4. For info 661-1792.

**Boston** ☐ **Classic Films On Super 8 Film.** At The Boston Living Center. 140 Clarendon St. Free. For info 236-1012.

**Boston** ☐ **Friday Night at the Movies.** 4/27 Untouchables, 5/4 Gaslight, 5/11 Tootsie, 5/18 E.T. At the Center. 338 Newbury St. 8:05pm. \$2.



**Andre's Mother.** An American Playhouse presentation. With Richard Thomas, Sada Thompson, and Sylvia Sidney. Written by Terrence McNally. Premiered on PBS, March 7. Check local listings for repeat broadcasts.

By Walta Borawski

**A**IDS, like abortion, is a hot topic. People don't feel wishy-washy about either, and people usually have strong emotions about both. AIDS is Ryan White being hounded out of a community. AIDS is Philly Lutaaya returning to Uganda to confront his people, his illness, and his death.

On the other hand, AIDS is as many stories as it is people struck by it. *Andre's Mother* is struck by AIDS when it strikes down her son, her only child. But she is not going to go on *Donahue* with her pain; she is not going to make it the focus of a documentary. Like Ronald Reagan, she'll not speak its name.

Terrence McNally's play was originally eight minutes long and part of a Manhattan Theatre Club project in 1988. He extended it to 50 minutes for PBS, and the televised expansion stars Sada Thompson and Richard Thomas. Ironically, both these actors are famous for being parts of families — Thompson as the mother on *Family*, and Thomas as the eldest son on *The Waltons*. In *Andre's Mother* the concept of family is seriously questioned. Thomas, as Cal, Andre's lover, wants to be acknowledged, and touched, by Andre's mother (Thompson). Their problem begins with their mutual contact: Andre.

Andre never told his mother that he was gay, and he did not tell her that he was ill. We do not see Andre (except in photographs that his mother picks up and studies in his and Cal's apartment; and once we see his back in bed), and so to some extent he is as much a mystery to us as he is to his mother. We are rather shocked that she could fly from Texas to New York, to be met by surprise by a young man she has not met, and told that her son had to suddenly go to Connecticut to try out for the role of Edmund in *King Lear*. We are more shocked when that lover has to call Andre's mother from a telephone booth in a hospital in the middle of the night to tell her that her only child is dead.

Thomas brings his usual wide-eyed



Cal (Richard Thomas) and Katherine (Sada Thompson) in 'Andre's Mother.'

hunger to the role of Cal. He worships Andre, and he wants to have something real with Andre's mother. Andre's mother is emotionally shut down, and will not open to her son's lover; she will not even admit that that is who Cal is. They have a real standstill, and Andre's death does nothing to change this. In a very emotional speech, Cal tells the mother that "Andre died of AIDS." "I know that," she says.

There are other characters, most notably Andre's maternal grandmother, played by Sylvia Sidney, who seems to be ending her long film career by playing the grandmothers of gay men (the feature film *Summer Wishes, Winter Dreams* and the TV AIDS drama *An Early Frost*). Sidney is sublime here, her character is as open as her daughter is closed. While they are lunching in an expensive restaurant, she challenges the waiter with, "Are you gay?" He is up to the occasion and says he is. Sidney points to Thompson and tells the waiter, "Would you please tell her that it's not the end of the

world?" During this odd encounter the waiter asks Thompson if her son is gay. She says "No. Of course not." He gives her the receipt for the meal and says, "Your son's friend may want this."

We know that once upon a time Andre was a little child, and that when he fell on the sand his mother was there to comfort him. What we don't know is the family psychology that enables members to become this remote from one another. In Thomas' family, for instance, his patrician, terribly Vassar sister (Haviland Morris), is a bit of a walking statue. But she shows up at Andre's memorial service and in her own bloodless way celebrates the relationship between her brother and Andre. She says that she always wished Andre was straight, but since he was not and a man got to have him, she was glad the man was her brother. How a seemingly warm Rhode Island real estate salesperson (played ever so gently by Richard Venture) raised this woman and Cal, who recites a lyric from a Shakespeare

play at his lover's memorial service and then apologizes for dropping a couple of lines, is beyond me.

Andre's service says it all. We begin there, and through flashbacks go into other times. The service is conducted in a chapel very tastefully decorated with budding calla lilies, and a soprano is singing "L'amero, saro costante" from Mozart's *Il re Pastore*, as Cal leans over in the pew to explain the meaning of the aria to his father. Andre's mother is no musical slouch — she used to play a Mozart rondo on piano for the town queer when they were both in the seventh grade. But if this choice of music at her son's service gives her any pleasure, we'll never know it. As we will never know exactly what she thinks of all the somber men in suits who attend the service: if the A-list gays can't please Dragonlady, who can?

Ultimately, the poignancy of *Andre's Mother* comes from our own feelings of death and irreparable loss. Of course the sight of Andre's mother clutching her white balloon is not exactly a cold image. Cal's sister has leaned over to him in Central Park and says, "She doesn't seem to know what the balloons mean." So he leans into the woman he thinks of as his mother-in-law and says "When we let them go, it means we are letting Andre go." From that moment on, Andre's mother seems very unwilling to let the balloon go. And she is indeed the last one to release a white balloon, as Cal relinquishes his while trying to get Andre's mother to embrace him. As she clutches the string we go back with her to a time when Andre is a tiny child on a beach. She herself is young, slender, wearing a blue suit, maybe more open than she is now. Andre giggles and runs about, then falls and goes boom on the sand. She goes halfway to Andre, then beckons him to come the remainder of the way to her. He does. She holds and comforts him. Cut back to a tight-faced old woman in black, very reluctantly letting go of a white balloon.

I, for one, would love to know what happened. In the meantime, *Andre's Mother* is gorgeously acted and photographed. The writing is stilted and formal, which I assume is quite intentional, but I never for a second believed it to be coming from outside the gay community. It is not my life and death, but it is one of ours. □

If You Have Not Taken the HIV Antibody Test...

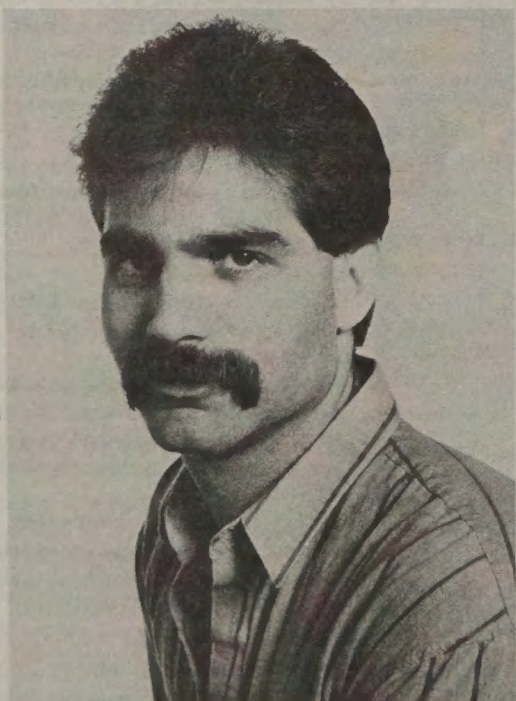
# THINK ABOUT IT.

If you test positive you have medical choices:

- Treatments such as AZT and Aerosolized Pentamidine that may slow or prevent some HIV-related illnesses.
- Tests to measure how well your immune system is working.

Keep in mind:

- You should get pre- and post-test counseling from an HIV-sensitive health care provider, or at an Alternative Test Site.
- Your current housing, employment and insurance may be affected.
- You will need emotional support before, during and after the test.



**YOU CAN  
FIGHT HIV!**

**Give yourself a  
chance.**

AIDS ACTION Committtee cares about your health.  
We hope you will take care of yourself by getting good health care and by continuing to practice safer sex.

For information about HIV Illness call:

AIDS ACTION Line	(617)536-7733
Fenway Community Health Center	(617)267-0159
Alternative Test Site Program	(617)522-4090